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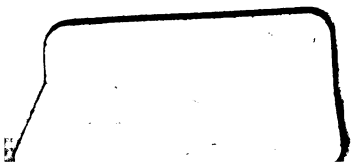

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CHIKKIN HAZARD.

CHAPTER I.

"I wants to make your flesh creep."

Fat Boy in Pickwick.

In a dim cave, lighted by only one small gas-lamp, sat Michael and Job Friestlor. Michael was Job's father, and older than the latter by some few years.

"Why have you brought me here?" demanded Job, in a hollow voice.

"Why? ha! ha!" laughed the elder, grimly, and both his eyes shooting forth a murderous fire, he rose from his seat and waved a keen-edged hatchet above his head. Job turned deadly pale. He could scarcely raise his glass to his lips as he said with a sickly smile, "Always the same lighthearted creature, father."

Once, twice, the fearful weapon flashed through the air, and then descended upon——

But not on the prostrate form of Job Friestlor fell THE COLD *STEEL.*

CHAPTER II.

Not on the prostrate form of Job Friestlor fell the cold steel. *For, the form of Job Friestlor was not prostrate.*

But as Michael bent forward, the younger and more active man sprang upon his back, and by a trick which he had learnt from the Rutlandshire wrestlers, staved in his father's head between his shoulders.

Had Michael been in good training, his muscles, hard and taut, would not have yielded to this sudden pressure, and his brave old heart would have snapped altogether, nigh broken as it was even now by his son's thoughtless and unfeeling conduct. But his muscles were lax, and gave to the force thus exerted so easily as to cause the old man a sensation of extreme pleasure, as of drowning, especially when his head rose once more to the surface.

The second which this had occupied seemed years to Michael, who in that dark moment had seen all his young life brought before him, had seen his parents imploring mercy at his hands, his brothers at his feet, his sisters starving under his roof, his aunts and uncles chained to the damp walls, the flames bursting from the convent, the ship scuttled, the Derby favourite hocussed, the *bridegroom poisoned*, the butler (who was supposed to

have stolen it) exiled, the Sepoy's cruel sword descending on her fair young neck, the fierce animal rushing on him with whetted tusks, Sir Jasper's white hair streaming in the wind, the calm martyr refusing the Emperor's last offer of life, and he raised his hands to shut out these fearful sights.

A roaring sound as of lions raving and tearing into the cave.

Job knew it well.

There was no hope now.

No Hope! !

It was the remorseless tide advancing.

The Remorseless Tide! ! !

In another five minutes the cave would be filled.

Five Minutes! ! !

"I shall take it in through the pores," observed Michael, in whom the instinct of self-preservation was stronger than the greed of gain.

The aperture through which the sea flowed in was scarcely big enough for a man's body.

The idea struck them both: at once. Whose Body?

"Father," cried Job, kneeling kown, "your forgiveness;" and he clung to his parent's knees frantically.

"Job!" exclaimed the aged fisherman, "rise, I entreat, I com——"

Louder and fiercer comes the remorseless tide.

Seizing his knees, and head for the second time, Job compressed his father into the smallest possible compass, and inserted him backwards into the entrance of the cave.

The wind might beat, the waves roar and surge against

that old man, but his ear was for ever deaf to the voice of his favourite child, who now knelt before him to implore his last blessing. There he sat, fixed, taking it in, as he had said, through the pores.

Ah! was it a good deed for a young man but now beginning the battle of life? Was it a deed on which he could look back with comfort in his last days?

But we will not weary the reader, nor occupy his time uselessly in making remarks upon conduct which will speak for itself.

To our tale.

Looking up at the stalactite roof above, Job saw with horror that it was gradually melting. To remove his father and admit the air, was to let in the water.

The sun acting externally upon the surface had rotted the cliff above; it wanted but the exclusion of the air underneath to set the crumbling mass in one steady blaze.

He was alone! It was a maddening thought.

ALONE!

Was there no hope?

No chance of escape?

Yes—one.

ONE! ! !

For through a fissure in the lurid rock above he now distinctly saw, as it were, a gigantic iron hand swinging forwards and backwards, as if in search of prey.

It came nearer, nearer, lower, lower, within his reach. Leaping upwards, he——

CHAPTER III.

LEAPING upwards, he clutched the iron hand.

A grapnel, a huge grapnel!

Retaining a firm hold upon his preserver, Job looked towards the sky gratefully.

It was a balloon streaming calmly away towards the horizon.

To climb into the car and throw out its two occupants, who were at the moment engaged upon scientific computations, was to Job Friestlor the work of a second.

"My poor father!" sighed the young man, for now that the first excitement was over, he had time to give a thought to others. The old man had been *so* proud of him. He had often prophesied his rise in the world. "And here I am," said Job to himself, smiling sadly.

Still his situation was too critical for him to indulge in any maudlin sentimentality.

"What have we here!" he exclaimed, kicking his foot against a box lying at the bottom of the car.

The car was filled with chests of gold, bullion, and silver coins. Besides these there were tin boxes labelled with names and initials, containing title-deeds, policies, wills, shares in various companies, and blank cheques with signatures attached.

The balloon had evidently belonged to two fraudulent solicitors, who were escaping from justice.

They had met, as we have seen, with a fate richly merited. We shall hear of them no more.

Night came on. He was alone floating over the silent ocean.

"Where am I?" was his first thought.

He knew the Great Bear by sight, and this knowledge he felt would now be of infinite service to him if he could only see that constellation.

At last. The Great Bear.

He recollected how he had heard of mariners before the invention of rudders, guiding themselves entirely by the Great Bear, and he wondered how they had done it.

Then he burst into a loud chant, waking the sea-birds on the ocean's bosom.

Twinkle, twinkle,
Little star!
How I wonder,
What you are!

Then the words seemed to fly from him, and others came into his mouth, and he made wild rhymes, singing as if "star" rhymed with "balloon;" then he ran his fingers up and down imaginary scales on the piano, as he had been wont to do in his old fisherman's home, when, as a boy, he had played to his father after their late dinner. He then broke open a box of legal documents, and jumping in among them bathed himself as it were with deeds, scattering them wildly right and left of the car.

Then the strange idea came across him that he was

Convocation, and he tried to shut down the lid upon himself. * * * Then followed a second of acute consciousness.

He was going mad: he knew it now—too late!

The paroxysm again.

In another hour the full moon was shining down upon a helpless idiot, sticking pins into the balloon, which was streaming slowly away towards the horizon.

Suddenly he jumped up, and with a wild laugh struck a match.

He applied it, thoughtfully, to the neck of the balloon.

At this moment his reason resumed its functions.

The fire was spreading!

Was all this treasure to be lost?

Ha! The parachute.

Lading it as quickly as possible, he lowered it from the car.

The fire! THE FIRE!!

Two large seagulls flew against the car.

He caught them both. Then tying the parachute thus weighted, to his feet, and holding a fluttering bird in either hand, he bit through the last cord that bound him to the flaming monster. One loud report, and as the smoke cleared—

* * * * * *

The parachute descended safely, landing its cargo upon a Benician Island.

An old boatman and his daughter found the wanderer on the shore.

The boatman's name was Martin.

His daughter was known as Elizabeth.

CHAPTER IV.

*** SIXTEEN years afterwards.

In the pleasantest room of the pleasantest house in one of the Benician Islands, built in the Gothic style upon the crater of an apparently extinct volcano, sat an elderly man and a young lady.

"Mr. Piel Dornton will be here this evening, to sign the contract," observed Lieutenant Marchmont to his niece Grace.

"Will he?" replied Grace, her beautiful countenance suffused with blushes.

"Will he?" thundered the Lieutenant, who was an old irascible Peninsular hero, and brooked neither questioning nor doubt.

In a second something flew from his hand, and whirring past his niece's ear, within an inch of her golden hair, was dashed into a thousand fragments against the mantelpiece.

It was the tea-cup.

Her eye darkened for a moment, where a splint from the crockery had struck her, but she soon recovered her good humour, and playfully taking up the classic urn, poured the contents upon her uncle's head.

He smiled.

"The sooner the better," she returned, replying to his observation about Mr. Piel Dornton.

"*Sooner or later*" was the warrior's innocent, but somewhat homely repartee.

Grace felt the inuendo, though she said nothing at the moment; but years after, this dwelt in her memory, and the poignant satire embittered the otherwise happy hours of her young life.

Their house, better furnished than any other in the island, had been carefully fitted up with dumb bells, so as not to disturb the Lieutenant's repose, who was something of an invalid.

She sounded, and an intelligent Boomerang entered the room.

"Clear away," she said, addressing him in his own language.

The Boomerang, a fine handsome fellow, regarded his young mistress with an expression of unutterable melancholy, and commenced his evening's work, using his feet like hands, with a dexterity which only early education could have given him.

Sometimes as she cast down her eyes, the poor Boomerang was sighing at her feet.

While these domestic arrangements are being carried out, let us say a few words about Mr. Piel Dornton.

The Rev. Piel Dornton had been in the island for nearly sixteen years. He was very rich. He had enormous feet and hands: no one knew how they had been acquired. He had no relations; that is in the island; nor did he speak of any one connected with him as existing elsewhere. He was unmarried; at least he had

always given out as much. In build he was if anything somewhat above the middle height, with a strong leaning towards corpulency, which in a man of twice his stature, and of a less emaciated appearance, would have been unnoticed, or would have passed for an evident mark of good breeding; but in Dornton it led the shrewd external observer to a wrong estimate of a character which was in other respects amiable, though perhaps a little too reserved for his associates. Generally, and among those of the other sex especially, his coleopterous propensities were the theme of unbounded admiration.

On his arrival in the island he had announced himself as a clergyman, and the good bishop, having immediately collated and inducted him, subsequently, gave him letters of introduction to all the most savage tribes, among whom the proficiency of the new minister upon the harp of Ancient Judah was to have been soon turned to account by the astute prelate.

But for one person.

GRACE MARCHMONT?

Or another?

Was Grace always in his thoughts? Perhaps.

OR ANY OTHER WOMAN?

Rising from his solitary meal, the Clergyman said "Grace," after dinner, to himself, and walked down towards the shore.

It was the cheapest and shortest route to the Lieutenant's house.

"Why give more?" he asked himself, as he descended the steep.

Footsteps behind him!!

He peered over the ledge of the rock; not a soul.

Taking from his neck the badge of his calling, he paid it out over the cliff. When it had reached downwards, some two hundred feet or so, he carefully fastened it to the stem of an old tree.

Chuckling to himself, the clergyman readjusted what remained of his white tie, and walked slowly on.

No footsteps this time, but a young man in a boat.

The Rev. Piel Dornton shuddered.

"Bah!" he muttered to himself, "this is cowardice!" and filling a tumbler of brandy from a magnum, which he invariably carried in his breast-pocket, he drank it off.

"So," he said, "Calmer now. Calmer."

He could read two names on the boat. "The *Penguin*, by Joseph."

Slowly he drew forth a pistol, and pointing it steadily at the oarsman, took such sure and certain aim——

CHAPTER V.

SLOWLY he drew forth a pistol, and pointing it steadily at the oarsman, took such sure and certain aim as would have undoubtedly terminated Joseph's existence, but that it was unloaded.

It flashed across his memory now that he had been at the Episcopal Palace in the early morning and there had seen

The bishop drawing a charge.

Little had he then thought how it would affect his after career.

The man in the boat, Joseph, looked up on hearing the snap of the trigger.

"*Pas pour Joseph!*" he sang out in a clear tenor voice, touching his cap reverently to the ecclesiastic, and at the same time giving a strong pull with both sculls, which caused him to disappear within the water-cave.

The clergyman remained wrapped in meditation.

"*Vidi te!*" said a voice behind him, and turning, he recognised the kindly old bishop looking at him slily through the crook of his highly ornamented crosier. "*Hamus id! hic est Lictor veniens,*" he said, in old monkish Latin.

*It was a coast-guard*sman coming over the hill.

"Joseph, you have escaped me this time," said Dornton to himself, as he parted with his superior, and wended his way towards Marchmont House.

He could not knock at the door. Strange, he was shy and nervous as a boy in his first love.

He climbed up the conservatory and looked through the top.

By the light of the lamp he saw her fair form like a bright angelic picture, and he felt a thrill pass through his frame.

Slowly he drew forth the pistol and took deadly aim.

"Tush," he said to himself, smilingly, "'tis but a mere matter of habit," and replaced the weapon in his tail-coat pocket.

But there was another form close to Grace's.

Whose? The thought was madness. WHOSE FORM?

Dashing through the thin panes of glass which ill served to prevent his entrance, he burst into the room.

What sight met his gaze!

Grace, in full ball costume, lying on the sofa, covering her eyes with her hands, and by her the aged Lieutenant, clutching the poker in his nervous grasp——

Dornton ran forward, and——

CHAPTER VI.

AND seized the weapon.

"In my own house!" exclaimed the Lieutenant.

"Never!"

So saying he stirred the fire, which in the Benician Islands becomes a necessity during the July evenings.

"And Grace?" inquired the Clergyman.

"Is well," she replied, going towards the piano.

"Music!" exclaimed the Lieutenant, placing two fingers in his mouth, and giving a shrill whistle.

WHOSE FINGERS?

His own.

She struck a few brilliant chords on the instrument, and then broke into a *Tarantella.*

"Shall we polk?" asked the Clergyman, seizing the Lieutenant round the waist.

"With pleasure," was the answer; and, gracefully curving and bending, they went round the room.

Oh! those happy evenings in Benicia

"Now for the Contract," exclaimed Grace.

They all seized pens, but before Piel Dornton could affix his signature a loud report as of a cannonade burst on their ears.

The House divided.

"Smithereens!" exclaimed one of the three. The Lieutenant was the speaker. In another instant the speaker had left the chair. Amidst confused cries

THE HOUSE SUDDENLY ROSE.

"Ha!" cried the Lieutenant, as clutching at his niece, they went up slowly in the air together. "I know!"

"What!" exclaimed the agonized girl.

"The volcano on which our house was built was not extinct—the Architect was wrong."

CHAPTER VII.

FREEDOM.

CERTAINLY Piel Dornton was in luck. The volcanic eruption which had caused Lieutenant Marchmont's house to be raised from the ground had forced him through the window, whence he fell, the worse for a few bruises, on the velvet lawn in front.

"Fallen on the lawn," the Clergyman said to himself. "That promises well for a bishopric *in futuro*." He knew Latin and spoke it, when nobody was listening.

Marchmont House had disappeared, and with it the Lieutenant and Grace, *but the contract of marriage was still in Piel Dornton's hand.*

Piel looked cautiously round. He was a bold bad man, but even bold bad men sometimes are obliged to look round cautiously. "It was easier for him," he recollected his father saying this, "to look round than to keep square."

At the thought of his father, Dornton paused and murmured, "Still taking it in through the pores. So many years ago. How quickly the time has passed."

His eye fell upon the paper in his hand. The sound awoke him from his reverie.

He walked to his own house, and unlocking a desk *which opened with* a spring, he drew from a secret

drawer a small bottle of black ink, a steel pen, a holder, a sheet of white paper, and an ordinary blotting pad.

Then he lit the fire.

He was evidently uncertain as to his next proceeding.

He rang the bell.

A servant in a large mask and a deep sepulchral voice answered the summons.

Dornton asked if anyone had called, and receiving a reply in the negative, told the man that he was not to be disturbed for the next three hours.

He sat down before the desk, and spread out the contract before him.

To it were affixed the names of Charles Augustus Leonard Marchmont and Grace Marchmont.

What was he doing with that pen, and that black, black ink, which seemed to grow blacker and blacker under the hands of Piel Dornton?

He was writing.

It was a troublesome task apparently, for he laboured at the work slowly and wearily.

The clock-hands passed over the second hour, and still Piel Dornton worked on with the black wicked ink and the hard remorseless steel pen scratching the paper before him.

Had he been less absorbed in his occupation he would have noticed that to the topmost branches of the stately elm in front of his window was fixed a small cradle, which being moved gently to and fro by the summer south wind rocked its occupant as tenderly as if it had been set in motion by the maternal foot. Not that if he had seen it he would have taken much note of the cir-

cumstance, it being the common practice of the poorer classes in this part of the world so to dispose of their children when they themselves cannot pay for a nurse during the hours of their daily toil.

Had he known that within that cradle lay an infant, he would have in all probability pulled his blinds down; but as it happened, it entirely escaped his observation.

There lay the little creature, apparently quite content to play with the bells of its plated rattle, and suck the imitation coral.

Yet the child did not shake the bells, but held them in its little hand, grasping them so firmly as to prevent the slightest sound catching the ears of the anxious writer at the escritoire. Moistening the red-dyed bone between its chubby lips, the infant ever and anon cast a furtive glance towards Piel Dornton.

It was midnight before he had finished.

"The next thing," he said, "is to go to work with a will."

WITH A WILL!

Then he arose from his chair and regarded his work with satisfaction.

"It is worth the risk," he murmured to himself: "it is worth the risk."

CHAPTER VIII.

LOST.

WITH a sharp heavy splash which sent the water up twenty feet high, the house, so singularly detached from its foundations, by the volcanic action recorded in our last chapter, fell on the upheaving bosom of the ocean.

The question now was, whether the building would sink or swim.

It was an anxious moment for all three, for the faithful Boomerang who was just entering the room with a lamp when the explosion took place had been carried with them.

In the peculiar construction of their mansion lay their safety. The Architect had been a man of extreme fancy and great ingenuity (he had, indeed, been subsequently recommended to the British Government as a fit and proper person for a sinecure at one of their large establishments—the Hanwell College) and had fashioned the under-flooring of the drawing-room, forming the ceiling of the kitchen, after the manner of the keel of a large boat.

What had always been an eye-sore to Lieutenant Marchmont now proved their salvation. The house floated on the waves, drawing about four feet of water, *without the* occupants feeling any more inconvenient

motion than they would have experienced on an ordinary sea-voyage.

They were somewhat afraid to open the low French windows, whence they had formerly stepped on to the lawn—and they felt the want of air.

But on the second day they discovered three trap doors in the roof, and the Boomerang having found a saw, in a short space of time with the aid of a few nails and a hammer, joined the three traps together, so that the whole of one side of the sloping roof could now be opened and shut at pleasure.

Fortunately the remains of the tea, with muffins, dry toast and butter, were still upon the table. The Boomerang, who, by the way, had been in their service for nearly fifteen years, was named Nutt—at least so he had always given them to understand—now rose with the occasion, and exhibited a spirit, a determination, and a knowledge which, though it did not strike them at the time, was far above any educational acquirements of the ordinary Boomerang native.

The Lieutenant sat moping in his arm-chair. Grace played a little upon what remained of the piano; but Nutt assumed the directorship, and at once, as a practical man, portioned out the tea, the dry toast and butter, so as to put them all on allowance for four days. "His religion," he said, merrily, "taught him charity, and he always made allowances for everybody."

So they ate sparingly three crumbs each of toast, two drops a-piece of tea, and then sat on the ledge above, *with the half-roof* lifted up, and gazed upon the murmuring sea.

She was abstracted, and as the poor Boomerang regarded her placid features he heard her uttering gently a name—"Piel."

Looking down into the room, he saw the Lieutenant stealthily moving towards the sugar.

In a second he was down silently, and seizing the old man by the wrist, forced him back into his seat.

"Sugar!" gasped the wretched man.

"No," replied Nutt kindly, but firmly, "we must feed equally."

"And," added Grace, nodding to her Uncle, "as to the sugar, if you do not like it you must lump it."

They were the first unkind words she had ever spoken to him. She felt it was necessary, and that upon her resolution now depended their common fate.

CHAPTER IX.

A BIRD IN THE HAND.

WHEN Grace awoke on the fourth morning she was surprised to find Nutt already up, and apparently engaged in placing lumps of sugar about the roof. In his hand he held a small cruet. To her inquiries, he merely said, "Wait and you will see."

She waited for an hour, and Nutt hearing a slight scream, rushed to her.

"Oh!" she said, "I am very foolish, I know, but an enormous creature flapped up against the side, and took away some of the sugar. There—look—there he is in the water."

Nutt watched the living thing narrowly, and then replied, "I thought as much. That is the Pangofflin, or Mew-pig. It is only seen in the summer in this southern climate, and then but for a month. It is a great delicacy, and is almost if not entirely unknown in England, and the more northern countries. It shows us, moreover, our exact situation. We are," he added, looking cautiously round, "Longitude sixty-seven by two and a half, latitude twenty-eight by ninety, and therefore we cannot be very far distant from the small cluster of slands known as the Parsongkor Daycoovert group. *The cruet which I* now hold in my hand contains

common table salt. It is an excellent substitute for fire-arms."

Grace was somewhat surprised at this, but urged him to continue his interesting conversation.

The poor Boomerang's eyes glistened at the implied compliment, mastering his emotion with a cotton pocket handkerchief, he proceeded :—

"The sugar which you see I have placed about the roof will serve as a safe bait for the Pangofflins, who will alight and attempt to carry a piece away. That one just now succeeded only on account of your screaming."

"I will be more careful in future," said Grace.

"When a larger one than usual has perched, I shall take the cruet, and extracting a dainty pinch of the saline condiment between my finger and thumb, I shall sprinkle it upon his tail. This operation has a mesmeric effect, the bird staggers, and after a few feeble endeavours to regain his liberty, he falls and dies."

"You speak," exclaimed Grace, in wondering admiration—"you speak, like a book." He was about to say something when,

"There," she exclaimed, suddenly,

"LOOK!"

CHAPTER X.

EDUCATING A PARTY.

NUTT stepped forward, quietly, and in a second more had captured a fine plump Pangofflin, which had perched itself near a lump of sugar.

"You must pluck him," said Nutt, laughingly to Grace.

The Lieutenant looked up for one moment. "You must examine him first, and pluck him afterwards," said the old man.

"He is thinking of his first Army examination," whispered Grace. "Poor Uncle! The events of the last few days have completely shattered him."

Lieutenant Marchmont was evidently not long for this world.

"The Pangofflin, you will observe, Miss Marchmont," said Nutt, "is something between a pig and a trout, and while it has all the exquisite fat of the turtle, possesses none of the coarseness generally inseparable from the flesh of a dirty feeder."

Grace blushed.

"The tea-pot will serve us for a stew-pan, and while he is being cooked, distil the liquor through the spout into a tea-cup, which you will find will furnish your *Uncle with a nutritious* soup.

"Let the stewed Pangofflin stand for an hour, then divide it into six equal parts."

"That will be one for each of us, and three over," said Grace, who was already beginning to show an aptitude for abstruse calculation.

"True," replied Nutt. "One of the other three parts we will use for a different but not less useful purpose."

A groan from the sofa interrupted their conversation at this point.

It was the Lieutenant.

"He cannot last out two days," observed Nutt, after feeling his pulse and looking at his tongue, "However, I will prescribe for him."

So saying, he took one of the chairs, and turning it upside down, commenced unscrewing the little brass wheel on one of the legs.

This wheel he then rubbed gently with his pocket handkerchief, upon which it left a slightly greasy smear.

"I thought so!" he exclaimed, triumphantly, "let us never despair. Your Uncle, unknown to us, has taken the sugar at which the first Pangofflin had a peck, and, as might have been expected, it has not agreed with him. Now for my remedy: each of these little brass wheels contains a certain amount of oil, which from time to time has been rubbed into them, in order to render their transit across the carpet easy; this oil can be extracted, and being placed in a cup, will make excellent medicine for the Lieutenant. In the absence of a chemist's shop, these little wheel-castors, I think they are termed—will give us the nearest approach we can obtain to

CASTOR OIL.

The Lieutenant groaned.

"Quick! quick!" exclaimed Grace, raising her Uncle up in her arms, "or it may be too late."

CHAPTER XI.

WHICH WAY THE WIND BLOWS.

PIEL DORNTON walked towards the window.

"It *is* a risk," he repeated, and pressed the papers which he held in his two strong hands.

"There are no witnesses; why not?" he said to himself.

Looking upwards he perceived the cradle: and started.

NO WITNESSES?

"The child is out late," he said, frowning. "Mrs. Dixon should be more careful. How does she know but that a high wind might——"

He paused.

Should he never be free?

The southern breeze which had hitherto rocked the cradle forwards and backwards, was gradually dropping, and in its place was springing up a stronger and sharper blast which, driving down from the north often visits the Benician country, sometimes in its fury tearing up trees, rending rocks, and carrying away men and animals for twenty miles with irresistible violence. This dreaded breeze is called the Azuwos. It was springing up now.

Piel Dornton gently undid the rope by which the cradle *was* suspended.

The wind blew fiercer.

Piel Dornton rang the bell. "Tell Mrs. Dixon I wish to see her."

With a heavy crash the cradle fell.

In a minute the frantic mother was kneeling by the side of her infant.

"Who has done this?" she exclaimed.

Piel Dornton passed down the garden on his way from the house.

"My dear Mrs. Dixon," he said, in his softest tones; "you left your baby on the top of the tree." She paused and pressed her brow. He continued, quietly, "When the southern wind blows, the cradle is rocked, I know; but when that wind drops, and the Azuwos arises, the cradle, Mrs. Dixon, will fall, then down must inevitably come the cradle, the baby——"

"Aye, Piel Dornton," interrupted the woman, savagely, "AND ALL."

She was kneeling on the grass, with her baby clasped in her arms, and both hands stretched high above her head towards the starry sky.

Piel Dornton, papers in hand, passed on.

"Mary Dixon," he muttered, "you mean mischief."

But for the present, the WILL.

Turning the corner he entered the bank of Messrs. Chekk, Diss, Count, & Co., the great Benicia Agents.

What was he doing there?

CHAPTER XII.

IN BANCO.

THE Clerks received him.

"We were just closing," said old grey-headed Mr. Snagg, the Senior Cashier; "but pray walk in, Mr. Dornton. What can we do for you, sir?"

"Cash this," replied Piel Dornton, presenting a cheque for two million six hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds.

"Will you have it now," inquired Mr. Chekk, "or wait until it is given to you?"

Piel Dornton preferred the former alternative. "I shall also require money for this," he added, presenting a formidable-looking document.

"The signature is a good one," said Mr. Snagg, smiling. "I don't think there'll be much difficulty about that. I will just make a memorandum of the transaction."

So saying the methodical old man drew out a neatly-bound ledger and made the following entry:—

"*Paid to the Rev. Piel Dornton on account of Lieutenant Charles Augustus Leonard Marchmont's cheques to said account, and also on account of the aforesaid Charles Augustus Leonard Marchmont's last will and testament, the sum of three million sterling, allowing the present price of Benician stock and discounting the same at 93¾.*"

Here followed the date and the signatures for himself and the pártners.

And so Piel Dornton went back to his house the acknowledged heir *of the late* Charles Augustus Leonard Marchmont.

CHAPTER XIII.

FLOATING CAPITAL.

WE must use our privilege as novelists, and leaving Piel Dornton in enjoyment of his ill-gotten gains, return with lightning-thought speed to the Volcano Villa, buoyed upon the broad bosom of the mighty ocean.

While they were thus floating, the Lieutenant was sinking fast. Nutt held him up head downwards, beat his hands and feet with hair-brushes, spent hours upon him (as many as he could spare away from the necessary work of navigation) in applying the red-hot poker, as, he confessed, a last chance of stirring his fast numbing extremities, all in vain.

Early in the morning of the fifth day at sea the Lieutenant was committed to an ocean grave. They interred him decently.

Nutt said as much of the prayer for the High Court of Parliament as he could recollect from memory, and Grace's clear ringing voice intoned an "Amen" whenever his recollection of the precise words failed him.

Then they sat down and wondered.

Sad as was the Lieutenant's fate it was a providential occurrence, as the cold tea was coming rapidly to the last drop, and even as it was Nutt was obliged to limit their allowance of food to ⅜ of an half an inch of the remain-

ing dry toast per diem for Miss Grace's sustenance, and $\frac{6}{7}$ of the same for himself.

The Pangofflins becoming crafty were no longer to be allured by the saccharine bait which in spite of the ingenious remedies invented by Nutt for his recovery, had proved so fatal to the Lieutenant.

Within the last two days Grace Marchmont had noticed a gradual change coming over the hitherto despised Boomerang.

"His features are softening," said Grace to herself, as she came upon him once fast asleep. "I trust it is no indication of the brain."

His legs and hands caused her no small anxiety.

"And this man," she thought, "is undergoing so much for *me*."

One morning she ventured to ask him if he could tell where they were now?

"Where are we now?" he repeated, gently. "I think I can ascertain the precise spot for you without reference to such geographical charts as unfortunately for us are in the possession of the Admiralty officials in various parts of the world. Have you a thimble?"

She had three still in her work-box, and gave them to him, wondering to what use he would adapt them.

"You see, Miss Marchmont, in this hand I hold a small pellet formed of the dry toast, which I shall subsequently consume for my breakfast. I will merely call upon you to observe that I have nothing concealed in my sleeve, and I need hardly remark that, situated as we are, I am in possession of no mechanical contrivances, *no sort of springs*, or false bottoms."

She bowed slightly, in token of acquiescence, and he proceeded.

"I place this tiny pellet upon your work-table, which I see stands sadly in need of repairing, and I hide it for one minute from your view by the simple process of covering it with one of the three thimbles with which you have kindly furnished me. Moving these rapidly from left to right, and again from right to left, I pause for a moment to ask you where, in your opinion, the little pellet of toast is at this moment concealed."

She considered.

At length she replied, with evident hesitation, "Under the centre one."

He lifted up the thimble on the right side. Underneath it lay the pellet.

He tried the experiment several times, and invariably with the same result, varied only by the situation of the toast-pellet in relation to her guess.

"I have taken this means, Miss Marchmont," he said, "to show you how difficult it is to pronounce with certainty upon the position of even so small an object as a toast-pellet within a narrowly limited circumference, and therefore, by parity of reasoning, how magnified becomes the difficulty, when its subject is the exact position of two human units within the almost boundless circumference of the vast ocean."

She sat gazing upon him with her large eyes open, in almost childlike reverence of a character so gradually revealed—so new to her. Then she glanced downwards towards his feet. He interpreted her glance, and answered it.

"They are sea-legs," he said. "I will make you a pair."

Presently he came up from below with a beaming face. "I have discovered our exact position." Grace looked at him inquiringly.

"We are," he said confidently, "HERE!"

It never occurred to her to doubt his assertion for one moment. A week ago she would have resented his proffered opinion as an impertinent outrage.

That day they ate the last of the toast, and drank the remainder of the cold tea.

Towards evening Grace complained of an unsatisfied craving for nutritious food. The flight of the Pangofflins was indeed a loss.

Nutt sat silent for a few minutes. Then he turned to her.

"Will you play on the piano?" he asked.

"I cannot sing the old songs," she replied, "but I will comply with your request."

While she struck the few remaining notes, he was busy fashioning a pin into a hook-shape.

Then he dropped his line into the sea.

"I have no bait," he said, "and your music is now our sole chance. Play something catching."

A tremendous splash and a heave, which, as appeared to her, nearly capsized the frail tenement, caused her to leap from her music-stool in consternation.

"Ah!" she exclaimed in terror. "He has fallen overboard!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"TE CREDO, MEUS PUER!"

The "Adelphi."

WHAT feeling at her heart was it that sent the life's blood coursing from her face, that forced her to lean against a chair for support?

He was overboard.

Drowned, perhaps!

Neither.

"Do not be afraid," cried the voice of Nutt, reassuring her, "it is a terrific looking monster, but he will not hurt you."

He had hooked and landed an enormous marine creature, which writhed in grotesque twistings as it opened its jaws, and flapped its fins and tails against the sides of the drawing-room.

"Oh, take him away, he will spoil the furniture," was the feminine cry which rose to her lips; but she immediately checked herself, and holding out her hand to Nutt, said smiling, "Forgive me, I am very foolish, I know."

"We are indeed fortunate in securing such a prize as this, Miss Marchmont," said Nutt, securing the creature from committing further acts of violence, by holding

one of his antennæ, nipped tightly in the forceps of the tongs. "It is the developed Shrimp of the Antipodes, and is known in Southern waters as The Colleen Prawn. Its fin is equal to the most savoury turtle, its flesh just over the ribs nearly approaches in flavour the delicate Southdown, the brain has all the qualities of the most plump partridge, while the 'coral' which comes away in clusters, far excels the plover's eggs, and the tail is far superior to the ordinary apple-tart, upon which so much store is set in more northern climes. When stewed it distils from itself a delicious liquor, scientifically known as Shandegaf. Its presence here shows we are not far from land."

He looked at her: her face was pale, and in another second she would have fallen to the ground but for his support.

"I have talked too much," he said, kindly. "You are hungry."

So saying he at once proceeded to cut from his new acquisition a piece of rich juicy meat. The fire was burning, (he had contrived to keep it perpetually alight, as he had only a few matches, which he knew could not be easily replaced), and placing the teapot upon it, he had in a few minutes cooked sufficient to serve for their meal.

Then they sat down and ate heartily. It was like porkchops.

After the dinner they drank from the thimbles a portion of the Prawn's Shandegaf, which indeed was hardly less strong than a liqueur.

Then they suffered from indigestion. But neither

spoke of their sufferings to the other. So they sailed on for three hours.

Grace was the first to arouse herself.

"If we are so near land, would it not be possible to see it? But," she immediately added, fancying that Nutt was hurt by the insinuation, "we have no telescope."

Nutt, from whose face all traces of the Boomerang native were fast disappearing, looked quickly round.

She watched his movements eagerly. He seized the drawing-hearth broomstick, which could be lengthened or shortened at will, and wrenching off the brush end, pulled it out to its full length, and applied it to his eye.

Grace was in ecstasies. It was indeed just like a telescope. He then explained to her how a glass with water in it possessed magnifying properties, and one without water did not. The first, a tumbler half filled with sea-water, he fixed on the larger end, the handle; the other, a wine-glass partially filled, he attached at right angles to the smaller end where the brush had formerly been.

With this instrument he reconnoitred, for some time unsuccessfully. At length a loud shout escaped him.

"We cannot be far distant from the coast of Benicia," he cried.

She clasped her hands in expectant agitation.

"Through the large end I distinguish the shape of a buoy. On it is some writing. They have only one of this sort to mark the ship line off the Benicia coast, and as I read it—" he began to spell "B. E.—"

She *waited in agony.*

"It is," he cried. "It is——"

The BENICIA BUOY!

At that moment one of the fearful Atlantic waves, which had for the past five hundred miles been collecting for one vast effort its gigantic force, suddenly——

CHAPTER XV.

THE SYREN'S VOICE.

PIEL DORNTON had calculated his chances cleverly; perhaps too cleverly, for it is so difficult for a sharp man of the Dornton stamp to avoid being just a thought too clever for himself. He stretches out his arm to gain his object, but having griped the coveted possession, he overbalances himself and falls. The Rev. Piel Dornton had not yet fallen, but was he overbalancing himself? This was a question for the business conclave which met behind the glass doors in the Banking House of Chekk, Diss, Count, & Co., the great Benicia Agents.

Their decision was that the papers in their hands were correct, and they could find no reason for disputing the legality of the several instruments.

So Piel Dornton was cringed to, and bowed to, and fawned upon by the Benicians, and visiting cards from the wife of the Lord High Admiral, and the Bishop's Lady, down to the last importation into Benician salons, were showered in at the doors and windows of Phlebosco Palace, now the residence of the fortunate clergyman.

On the tenth day after the disappearance of Volcano Villa with its living freight, it became painfully evident that the Lieutenant and Grace had ceased to exist.

The Rev. Piel Dornton invited the inhabitants to a Masqued Ball, and he himself, as Cupid, was the gayest, and apparently the most light-hearted of all that merry, chattering, brilliant crowd.

"You are so satirical," said Lady Anna Domino, removing her mask in order the more easily and gracefully to apply her lace-embroidered mouchoir to her aristocratically-chiselled nose, a custom which the highly refined though somewhat artificial Benicians invariably adopt on occasions such as we are describing.

"Not to *you*," murmured Piel, looking into her full hazel eyes, whose lids were gradually lowered under his steady gaze.

"But you love some one else," she whispered, turning away her head.

"No; on my soul, no," exclaimed Dornton, passionately. The sound of the waltz came fitfully through the doors.

She was a handsome woman, Lady Anna, and she knew it. Through life, ever since her early impulsive marriage with the dissolute Sir Falsenows Domino, (who, *criblé de dettes*, had died, leaving her his entire property) her experience among men of the world had been of the *veni, vidi, vici*, order.

And now, what was this had suddenly come over her? Was she, the charmer, to be charmed at last? Had she, who had made even women's natural enemies, the serpents, dance to her piping, at length found the serpent who was to pipe to *her* dancing? Where was the fascination? Or was it he who was fascinated after *all?*

He watched her lying at full length upon the snow-white ottoman beneath the overhanging fuchsias and dainty jessamines; he watched her as she arranged her pink satin dress with its drapery of *moiré antique*, trimmed with the rarest embrocation, seldom applied, except, as now, externally, and he smiled as she threw herself back, reclining upon the damask pillows. A coronet of diamonds, each separate stone far exceeding the Koh-i-Noor, sparkled in her dark hair; rings flashed and coruscated again and again, lighting her taper fingers; small tinkling bells, Benician fashion, sounded from her sandals as she pressed the drawing-room pile, or shook her feet twinklingly, over the edge of the *fauteuil*. Torches of naphtha (for Piel Dornton spared no expense) shed their soft light upon her, and upon the cream-like and rosy tints of the cold frozen ice and small thin wafer cake which she had taken for her refreshment in that pale voluptuous hand.

"I wonder," she said after a little pause, "where Banbury Cross is?"

"Do not talk the world's cant to *me*," said Piel Dornton, suddenly rising and violently kicking over the *ormolu* tables, the lamps, the chairs, and the bigger ornaments in the room. "I know you—beautiful as you are, I know you." He stood by the mantel-piece glaring upon her. Her eyes looking up, met his, and she listened intently. She had never seen him in this mood before. "Tell me," he said, calmly, yet with firm determination as he flung the velvet stool through the window, "Tell me, why am I here?"

For one moment she, the conqueror, the syren who

loved so many to their destruction, felt how she had been trapped, caged, caught.

Piel Dornton rose from the hearth, and coming towards her, clasped her waist in his iron grasp. She was powerless in his hand, and suffered herself to be carried into the ballroom like a child.

The Bishop was bringing the festival to a close by leading the last dance, which, as is the Benician custom, has something in it of the religious element and of the action of worship; the entire movement has its own peculiar music, and is dedicated to one of the Island's patron saints, St. Vitus—the other patron being the guardian of Hospitality, namely, St. Invite-us.

Piel Dornton forced Lady Anna to kneel down, as his ecclesiastical superior removed from his face the white and red colours which had served him for a temporary disguise during the Masque.

"My Lord," exclaimed Piel, seizing the Bishop's hand, "she will be my wife."

"*Bene ego nunquam!*" said the good Bishop, piously. "*Fecisti tu unquam?*"

Piel took a ring from the finger of the fainting Lady Anna, and was preparing to repeat the usual formula after the Bishop, when a slight rustling was heard in the crowd, and a black figure, closely hooded but with two brilliant eyes piercing through the apertures of her mask, stepped forward. On one arm she supported what was apparently a large oblong shaped bundle.

The disengaged hand she stretched out, and before the bystanders could prevent her ——

CHAPTER XVI.

'ΟΥΣ 'ΟΤΘΗ ΧΑΤΤ;

—— HANDED to Dornton a letter.

"Who brought this?" he cried, when he had read it.

No one could tell him. It was a black-hooded mask, and she had gone, silently, as she had come.

Lady Anna fainted, and was carried insensible to a fountain, in whose sparkling basin she was tenderly deposited, in the hopes that the cold fresh water would revive her.

"Who will take a message for me?" muttered Dornton to himself, confusedly, "Is there no one I can send?"

As if in answer to his half-spoken thought, a voice from the throng around hissed shrilly, "Me vil."

"Who spoke?" asked Dornton. A small form emerged from the crowd. It was the bundle which the Mysterious Mask had on her arm: a child.

"How old are you?" asked Dornton.

"Fourteen months and a half," was the ready answer.

"The emissary for my purpose," said Piel to himself. A bold bad man cannot act alone; he needs an instrument, a tool; rarely do bold bad men find such an one *present to their* hand as did Piel Dornton now.

"You know the town well?" he inquired, before handing him the note.

"Vev vel," answered the infant.

"Your name?"

"Ditthon; but they call me Little Bil*lee*."

Had not the ears of Piel Dornton been careless to their own good, he would have recognised in the infant's lisping accents the name of Dixon, and he would in all probability have called to mind the mother's words in the garden, uttered only a few short days ago, "*Down comes the Cradle, The Baby* . . . AND ALL!"

But he heeded not signs and sounds which might have saved him even then.

"Take the letter, Bil*lee*," he said, and gave it to the boy.

"Largethe," urged the child, extending its hand.

"He means Largesse," observed a bystander.

Dornton regarded him curiously for a moment.

"We have met before," he said.

The child's clear upward gaze brought no distinct time or place to his memory, and so dismissing the matter from his thoughts, he threw the urchin a piece of money, and waving back the curious crowd, he pressed his brows over his hat, and bidding them look to the comfort of the Lady Anna, strode from the ball-room, and scattering the pampered menials right and left, touched a secret spring in the wall, which, turning on a pivot, allowed him to pass through, and instantaneously closed behind him.

"At this moment!" he muttered, shaking his clenched fist in impotent rage towards the starry firmament. "To *send to me now!* But no matter!"

Here he thrust his hand into his open vest, and smiled with bitter scorn as he continued, "She shall be mine. Had I risked so much to stop short of my object *now*? Piel Dornton, there is a devil luring thee. What care I? Devil or angel to-night decides her fate and mine, perhaps for ever. So that is well," he said, as he drew a twelve-shooter from his pocket, and examined the priming. "This will enforce, when arguments and cajoleries fail." He trifled with the weapon for a few minutes, firing it off, loading and reloading, aiming at a tree while running, until he appeared satisfied with his own proficiency. Then he paused. What was that? a rustle? He fired into the bushes. With a scream like that of a child, a wild cat bounded forth and was lost to sight in the surrounding gloom.

Piel Dornton, who was an excellent shot, fired again, and the animal fell mortally wounded. "Bah!" exclaimed Piel Dornton, "This is folly. I have many miles to walk ere I reach *her* house. It must be done to-night—to-night! I have sworn it, and it shall be done." He turned out of the public path, and took his way by the Black Pine Wood. Alone.

As he disappeared among the arboriferous productions of a beneficent Nature, a small form emerged from behind a bush, and stole cautiously into the deep darkness of the night.

The diminutive watcher was searching for something. At last he stopped, and examined what appeared to be a shapeless bundle of white fur.

"In my power now," said the strange being to itself, "and he wanted to know if we'd met before. Yeth

Mithter Dornton, and we'll meet again thoon. Ha! Thee!"

The clouds breaking allowed the moon to send her strong bright white light upon the ground, bringing out a tall retreating shadow.

Concealing himself from the receding pedestrian's view by crouching within the deep shade of the shadow-head, and moving on hands and feet evenly with it, Little Billee (for he it was as our readers may have already guessed) closely followed him, dogging his footsteps.

So they descended the hill. One bent on his own cruel selfish purpose, utterly unconscious of the other; the latter with all the concentrated hate and suspicion of an infant's nature, pursuing steadily and marking down his prey.

Once and once only the thought crossed him that a struggle was inevitable, and he clutched his coral more firmly, and hushed the jingling silver bells, which, sounding mournfully in the night wind, fell on Piel Dornton's ear as a warning knell; but he heeded it not, and in his pride and false security strode onward to his fate.

The Benician Island was lulled in repose as Piel Dornton crossed the Common.

The sound of silent steps following him cautiously; surely; onward.

Onward.

Down the hill. Aye, Down the Hill.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRICK ACT.

LEAVING the pinewood forest on his right, Piel Dornton sprang upon his dark horse, which was waiting for him, and dashed rapidly across the broad uneven Common.

Unconscious of observation, he muttered to himself, "So, Piel! richer, feared, aye, and loved! What have I to desire? What remains?" Onward he sped dashing, crashing, through a plantation, as the night wind sighed and the stately trunks bent to the ground in the soft southern breeze, as though owning in the man their Lord and Master.

"Aye! ye green things," he exclaimed, standing upon his saddle, as he urged his panting mare into a gallop, "bow to *me*, to *me*, who am—ha! ha!" He laughed excitedly, and pressed his hand to his fevered head.

It was a sudden thought, but a good one, for his purpose. The horse was cantering on at an even pace, making the circuit of the Common several times before proceeding, and giving his rider time for the execution of his rapidly conceived design.

He tore off his coat, waistcoat, and hat, while the horse was still in motion, and throwing them away appeared in the disguise of a marine. Continuing thus for a few

minutes, he aimed right and left, as with a gun, and seemed to be defying an enemy.

"No," he said to himself, "this disguise will not do," whereupon lightly humming a tune, which appeared to exhilarate the noble steed that bounded beneath him, he recklessly divested himself of the military uniform, and in less time than it takes to describe, he exposed to view the dress of a sailor, which he had evidently been wearing beneath the other two.

"I can reserve the Apollo for another time," he thought, slightly opening the front of his sailor's shirt, through which it was possible to see the glittering spangles of the Sun-god's costume. "It is enough if I escape detection in this. 'Twas as a sailor I have always wooed her."

"Hi! hi! hi!" Shouting to his mare, and hitting her sharply on the off fetlock he waved his hat aloft, and hoisting a bundle in a pockethandkerchief tied on to the end of a stick, across his shoulder, careered onward.

His delay had enabled Bill*ee* to come up with him; concealing himself under the shadow of the flowing tail, as he had hitherto done in that of his rider's head, the infant followed him with stern purpose, and resolve, taking firmer and surer hold of him at every step.

On the border of the forest Dornton tied his horse up to a tree. Far off shone a light in the window of a lonely cottage.

"She is there," was all he said.

A gust sweeping the plain, took his light sailor's hat, and throwing it madly from branch to branch, drove it at *fierce pace through* the intricacies of the forest; here

Piel Dornton followed swiftly, for if he ever could be attached to anything animate or inanimate, he would have been to that now brimless battered hat as it bounded gaily over the moonlit plain which reached for miles in the basin naturally formed by the perpetual landslips, and the overshading pine hills surrounding it. He would not shout, he would not cry for assistance. Onward he hurried. One moment with extended arms to seize the receding form, another prone upon the uneven soil, then with his short curly hair streaming behind him in the breeze, he flew across the open plain. Onward! onward!

A distant murmur fell upon his ear. Louder, louder, the voices of a myriad deep-tongued monsters baying for a victim.

"The Sea!" he cried in terror. "It is the sea!"

Lucid, two-horned, antler-bearing, changeable, vague, wandering, nightly, continuous-by-night, silent, tacit, smiled the daughter of Latona upon the son of Saturn and Ops and brother to Jupiter and Pluto.

His pace had brought him impetuously to the very verge of the abrupt cliff, when from the door of the cottage a female form issued, and throwing herself across the object of his pursuit prevented its being carried forcibly over into the boiling waves beneath.

The first ray of morning light fell on their faces.

The woman raised her arms and screamed. She would have fallen over the cliff had not Dornton caught her in his arms.

"Bess! look up! speak to me!" he cried in an agony.

He knew she had recognised him, but at that moment, yielding to as irresistible an impulse as that which urged

the Grecian Matron Hubardé to make osteological search within the closed recess, or the wary Pimannos to entrap the yielding and simple Simonides on his road to the Athenian Fair, or the impulsive Hornerus to dare Dyspepsian dangers in extracting the solitary fruit of the Plumm-bearing tree,—he pressed his hot lips to her icy cold forehead, and felt such a thrill of pleasure shuddering through his frame as threatened to render his position upon that unguarded ledge every second more dangerous.

He had not noticed it, but by a coincidence he had stopped on the exact spot where some days before he had dropped the white cravat over the edge of the cliff, and it had remained there fluttering in the breeze.

"You are in my power now," he whispered, with concentrated passion in her ear. "Come! your father is dying; I know he will consent; let the past be forgotten. Come! Come!"

He seized her round the waist, but her voice returning, she uttered a piercing shriek, which was suddenly answered from below.

Dornton paused. He was a bold bad man, but even bold, bad men must pause sometimes. The time had come for him.

"It is Joseph," cried the poor girl. "He has heard me, and comes to my assistance."

"Bah!" laughed Dornton, savagely, "he is two hundred feet below the level of the sea, your chickweed-gathering lover; 'twill be dusk again ere he reach us. You are mine! Nay, pretty one, do not struggle."

But he had to exert all his force, for Bess, accustomed

to row her father's smack of seventy-eight tons, could put out more than the ordinary strength of a woman. But she was hardly a match for Piel Dornton, who lifting his now unresisting burthen far above his head, was offering her his love or instant destruction, which two steps forward would have accomplished, when a hand apparently issuing from the earth, grasped him firmly round the ankle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HAND OF FATE.

THE towering Atlantic wave, whose dizzy height only those who have once surmounted it to gaze upon the lake-like valley beneath, can possibly imagine, seized the devoted house with the hand of a giant, and twirled it into the air, as Nutt had often done with his hat for Grace Marchmont's evening amusement. For one instant she clung to him, but in the next, relaxing her hold, she, with true feminine instinct recollecting that her watch, which played two tunes and struck the quarters, would be most useful to her on some future occasion, wound it up rapidly, securing it tightly by the chain to her waist, and then as her maiden blood rose to her cheeks, pressed both hands firmly upon the skirts of her dress. So she awaited her fate.

Nutt's one thought at that moment was for her.

The huge wave, gathering itself together like a concrete sea-wall careering on the face of the ocean at a rate too fearful for contemplation, began to quiver beneath its own immensity as though trembling under the consciousness of its murderous work.

Ah! how little do we, sitting by our comfortable fire-*sides, realise* such dangers as these; and, after all, how *small, how little,* does this mighty work of nature seem

when told on paper. And what is it? A man and woman by themselves unaided, save by their own intelligence, left to battle with a vast Atlantic wave. And not an Atlantic wave only, but one which had rolled itself from one ocean to another, which had glided stealthily round the world's four corners into the broad ocean highway—a double horror, a multiplied power, an Atlantic wave in the Pacific.

The wild wind was its master, driving it onward in the dark night. It sucked in the smaller fish at its base and heaved them up to the top. Some of these Nutt was enabled to catch and place in his pockets.

"She," he said to himself, "likes fish."

What tables and chairs he could reach at the moment he attempted, somewhat unwisely, to seize and secrete about his person, as they were forced through the house window by inner pressure. As he did so he thought to himself how the time might come when she would be glad to sit down upon something, and then *he* would provide the means. Would she be touched at last? Would she at length understand him and read his heart?

A sharp cry from her attracted his attention, but the night was too dark for him to be guided to her, by anything except her voice.

He stretched out his arms, and leant, as he imagined, in her direction.

This action had unforeseen consequences.

The sudden weight, so slight in itself, thus brought to bear more upon one side than the other, destroyed the equilibrium of the already tottering sea-wall, and shaking

for one second as if the course of its fall were still uncertain, it toppled headlong and fell with one great gigantic ruin, and then the sea was calm and tranquil, and the moon shone out as upon a peaceful valley.

Grace, awaking from her stupor, found herself upon dry land. She pressed her hand to her side.

"My watch! thank heaven!" was her first exclamation.

The next instant she thought of the Boomerang.

Yes, where was Nutt?

And the house?

GONE.

She uttered a loud cry. She shouted his name, there was no response. She was on an unknown sea-shore, alone.

Then the roof of the house in which they had suffered so much together drifted in on the tide. In its wake floated a few notes of the old piano from the lower *b* to the upper *c*, reminding her of many happy hours in her Benician home past and gone.

Then she had recourse to true feminine relief: she cried. This was a relief to her. After a while she began to ask herself what *he* would have done had Providence willed him to be in her place then.

She came to the conclusion that her best course was a careful search. This led her to the southern extremity of the island, for she had no doubt it was an island, from seeing water entirely surrounding it, and here she began her work in real earnest.

A magnificent growth of trees of all sizes and descriptions covered the cliff down to the sea's edge; it

had all the appearance of a carefully preserved and well timbered park, so bountiful had nature been in this respect, and so careful of her bounties.

With a faltering step she approached the confines of the park, and uttered Nutt's name. There was no response; but as she neared the largest tree in the plantation a vague sense of heat well nigh overcame her.

"You are getting warm," said a well-known voice, in tones of deepest anxiety, not two yards distant from her.

"I am," she murmured faintly, "burning," and she stretched out her hand.

In another moment Nutt's strong grasp, as he stepped from behind a large trunk, prevented her falling to the earth.

"Forgive me," he said to her, almost apologetically, "I had but just awoke from a deep sleep, and seeing you approach, my first idea was to recall to your mind the light days of innocent childhood's pleasures, and to conceal myself behind yonder broad-shouldered pine."

"It was scarcely fair," she replied feebly, but with returning strength. "You should have cried 'hoop,' or something to that effect. At first I thought you lost," and the delicate form shuddered. Ah! what Heaven was this to him! He would have had her always shuddering, for that one thrill of strong excitement had set his veins on fire, and made his hair stand out rigid in the last red light of the glorious sun.

"Come," said he, playfully, "no more games: it is getting late, and this is our first evening in our new

quarters. We have much to do. What say you, Miss Marchmont, shall we name this group of trees, Seek Plantation?"

She answered him with an angelic smile, "Call it rather Hide Park."

"Be it so," returned Nutt, "and now to provide for our evening meal, for nothing is left us from the wreck of the old house."

"Except a few bon-bon crackers," said Grace, who had by this time regained her usual composure.

Nutt pondered for a few seconds, then he answered.

"No," he said. "There is not enough in one at a time for a single meal, and I doubt whether in this new climate the saccharine compositions would agree with us. Let us keep them as luxuries, and perhaps I can find a better use for them hereafter."

"Why mayn't I eat them now?" she asked, pettishly; "I shall, if I like."

Nutt regarded her in silent, loving, despondency. Who was this strange being who had so enthralled him? Was this the return for all his untiring patience, his unflagging zeal in her behalf?

She looked up.

"Forgive me," she said, smiling.

Forgive her! there was nothing to forgive. So he put the bon-bons in his own pocket, and told her that he had a good use in store for them which she should soon know, and, satisfied with this assurance, she put no further questions.

The sun had gone below the horizon, and night, later

in these southern parts than elsewhere, was coming on slowly but surely.

Grace looked at her watch. It played a tune and struck the quarters.

BEDTIME.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE IRON AGE.

NUTT, whose whole appearance, to the astonishment of Miss Marchmont, had gradually lost all its *Boomerang* character, divined her thoughts at once. "You shall have before nightfall," he said, "a house worthy of Hide Park, and," he added, after surveying the island for a few seconds, apparently calculating its internal resources, "every luxury which modern improvements furnish, or the dross of unbounded wealth can purchase."

She watched him in tearful admiration; she devoured him with her eyes. He was so strong, so good, so persevering.

"Now, make haste," she said to him, sharply, "and don't stand gaping there all day."

This inuendo cut him to the quick, but he felt it was deserved, and so he determined to be inactive no longer.

He plunged into the thicket, and almost instantly returned with an enormous tree.

"What on earth are you going to do with that?" was her question.

"This," he answered, "will be your house. Miss Marchmont, we are indeed fortunate. This is the Plant of the Entire Building. The trunk is in four compartments, and nature has herself made the staircase in a

rough and rugged way, only omitting banisters and stair-carpets, which we can easily add. We have but to fix this firmly in the ground and more than half our work is accomplished."

"Stay!" she exclaimed. "Have I not seen at home printed offers for selling an Entire Plant for Building or Manufacturing Purposes?" He nodded assent. "Why," she continued, with her eyes widely opening to the vastness of the idea, "I have seen as much as £100,000 offered for such a Plant."

"You have," said Nutt, "this is it; we are indeed in luck."

He laboured on for half an hour, and had then only got the first floor finished. He stopped for a few moments to gain encouragement from her smile and wipe the perspiration from his own brow. She was thoughtful.

"I *must* help you," she said, presently. "If I could only twist the sand on the sea-shore into bell-ropes—or—or—oh dear, what *can* I do? It will kill me to sit idle."

This was a good healthy sign, and Nutt would not discourage her.

"Well," he said at length, "you can go down to the shore and obtain some of that white and red sea-weed; when dried it will make admirable ornaments for the fire-stoves."

She rose quickly, but as suddenly stopped, and looked downwards. She had on only the very thinnest white satin shoes, having been in full evening dress when the fierce Atlantic wave swept them on their new career.

"Your poor feet!" he said, tenderly, but with a

puzzled air, for he himself was without boots of any sort.

She leant against a small tree, in thought. It bent with her weight and she jumped away from it, fearing that it was about to break, but on her removing the pressure the tree sprang up again into its original place.

She pointed this out to Nutt, who ran to examine the phenomenon. The next instant she saw him raising his hands and shouting like a maniac.

"What is it?" she inquired.

"This, Miss Marchmont," said Nutt, as quietly as his excitement would permit, "is indeed a most opportune discovery. Without it we should have had to undergo much suffering; *with* it we are at once upon our road to comparative ease and luxury even here. The damp of the marsh, the flints of the beach, the unpleasant moisture of the sands, we may, by the aid of this natural provision, alike defy. This is the celebrated Boot-tree."

"I have often heard my poor uncle mention it," she said, and a shade of melancholy passed over both their faces, as they remembered the deceased Lieutenant, and thought how fond he would have been of the Boot-tree had he been still alive. Then they came to action.

"Let me take the measure of your foot with this leaf. Thank you. 80 in the shade. Now," said Nutt, "in another moment you will be fitted."

He gained the top by means of short stunted branches, and selecting the strongest and best small pair from the uppermost boughs, descended triumphantly with them in his hand. "It is the Spring-time of year," he said, "and *therefore these* early boots have elastic sides."

"I'm sorry to hurt your feelings, Mr. Nutt," she said, when after trying one on it had been found to fit admirably, "but they are both rights."

"The rights of woman," said Nutt, playfully; "but," he added, seeing that she looked serious, "there is one left," and he went up aloft again to fetch it, returning as before.

Armed with these, she descended to the sea-shore, while Nutt cut down a few oaks, and having concocted a sort of putty with some earth moistened by the early dew, he commenced soldering the walls together, so as to keep out the draught. His next difficulty was the stair-carpets, and then the door-bell. This last nearly staggered him. While he was meditating this new difficulty, he thought he heard his name called, and looking round sharply, saw nothing. He was certain he heard it repeated feebly. He ran to the edge of the cliff as quickly as he could, for his new boots (he also had plucked a pair of a shinier and harder kind) pinched him sadly, and looking down, he saw what made his blood stagnate with horror, and recede from his thumping heart.

CHAPTER XX.

TIME RUNS ON.

GRACE MARCHMONT had sunk in terror upon the ground while an enormous turtle, more than six feet high, and broad in proportion, was standing upon its hinder fins of iron muscle, and was regarding her with a fixed amatory look, which Nutt at once interpreted as in the last degree threatening and dangerous. Poor Grace seemed utterly unable to move, fascinated by the bright twinkling eye of the leering savage monster which had assumed this hostile attitude a few feet from where she was gathering sea-weed. In vain Nutt above tried to distract the attention of the amphibious reptile; then he descended quickly, and taking off one of his new boots, hurled it at the creature's head. With a yell of disappointed love it turned from Miss Marchmont to regard its new antagonist, who was standing on the defensive, hoping to draw any attack upon himself, when the turtle seemed to stagger in his purpose, and instead of attacking Nutt, commenced a slow unwieldy movement, somewhat resembling a portion of the old minuet, swinging its head lazily from left to right, and accompanied by a low gurgling sound, like the half-suppressed laughter of *an idiot,* terrible to hear, while its eyes rolled with vague *inconstancy,* dwelling upon no fixed object.

Nutt saw at once what was the matter.

"I have read of such cases," he explained to Miss Marchmont, who, pale and trembling, was now by his side.

"The turtle is either mad, or simply an idiot. The head you can see from here is very soft. With one blow from a switch," here he cut one from a neighbouring tree by the aid of a blade of grass, which he had fitted to an agate handle, "I can despatch the fellow. He will be very good eating."

But at the sight of the switch the turtle suddenly reeled and fell, dead. It was so sudden and strange, that Nutt could scarcely credit the evidence of his senses.

"The turtle saw the stick and expired from fright," said Grace; "so much is evident."

"Nature, Miss Marchmont," answered Nutt, "never acts without a reason, however distant the motive power may be from our present vision, however obscure the cause of the visible result may be. In this case I think I have traced the effect to its proper cause. This huge turtle has been doubtless the parent of a vast family, all destined for the food of man, all in due time consumed as soon as they left their mother's care. Boats may have come sufficiently near here to have effected their capture, and if once taken to England, few of the tribe have ever been able to return. But those few what tales to tell, what names to mention (for animals have their own method of communication), what horrors to recount in connection with those names! Would not the words City of London, Alderman, Lord Mayor, be a lesson to the surviving mother.

Undoubtedly then she swooned and died on seeing that the switch with which I had armed myself was——" he hesitated.

"What? I long to know what?" exclaimed Grace, anxiously.

"BIRCH," replied Nutt.

This led to further conversation, and then Grace asked him if he thought anybody had ever been there before them. He was silent for a considerable time, but on her assuring him that it was not meant as a conundrum, he answered,—

"You asked me if I had any reason to believe that any one had ever been here before. I have." And he showed her certain indications of a building of some sort having once stood on this very spot.

What was remarkable and most puzzling about it was the indentations of apparently two wings, one on either side of what seemed to have been a hut.

"It has evidently sunk here," observed Nutt, "in some strong convulsion of Nature, probably dating back as far as the Diluvian period."

Grace was silent. Then she said slowly, "I know what it was. Trace its form. These which you think were wings, were *wheels*."

"A carriage," exclaimed Nutt, in utter astonishment at the deduction.

"No," answered Grace, gravely; "has nothing wheels except a carriage?"

He looked at her. His mind was busy suggesting watches, manufactories, organs, steamers, and as busily *rejecting them*. Then he said that he would give it up.

She answered slowly and sadly, "A bathing machine."

They were silent awhile, both occupied with the many serious thoughts suggested by this discovery.

Presently the bass voice gave utterance. "This was," it said solemnly, "perhaps the Margate of the ancient world, the Scarborough or Brighton of the ante-diluvian period. Here, perhaps, on the very spot where we now stand Ethiopia's swarthy sons have attuned their lays; nay more, may not the Original Bones lie even now beneath our feet? Here the earliest ancestors of the human race may have buried one another in the shingle, or filling their little pails with wet sand, have trotted to and fro with wooden spades upon its yellow surface."

At last Grace broke the silence which followed these observations. "Dinner!" she exclaimed.

A voice within him responded to the call, and he put forth all his energies to secure the best repast the island could afford.

His bill of fare was turtle fins, turtle soup, whitebait, *soupe à la rain*, boiled mutton and caper sauce, *pommes de terre frites*, omelet of turtle's eggs, salad, cheese of the island, and sardines.

To the first part of this banquet the deceased turtle contributed its share. The Whitebait Nutt found in the creek near at hand, also the sardines; but these last were more difficult to secure, as upon the approach of man, with an instinctive cunning, they packed themselves away in their natural tin cases, and, but for their lying too closely to allow of action, would have in this manner eluded his grasp. The soup was of a light, thin, clear nature, of which a little drop went a considerable way.

The mutton was easily obtained, for Nutt ascending the cliff found a fine fat long-haired sheep quietly browsing on the pasture land, which he immediately slaughtered, and gave to Grace to boil in the turtle-shell which he had ingeniously fashioned into a saucepan; then he went outside the house, cut some capers, and returned.

There was some difficulty about the fire at first, but Nutt soon showed Miss Marchmont how by compressing sea-water between the hands until all the noxious gases have evaporated, the residue of carbonic can be at once applied to sticks for the purpose of ignition. On the first opportunity he explained to her further how the same process on a larger scale could be with equal success applied to river water.

"Then," said Grace, "it is not impossible to set a river on fire?"

"By no means," answered Nutt, "provided the water will burn. But there are many contingencies which might prevent an inexperienced hand from attaining its object. However, our present task is with our dinner."

He had luckily caught one of the numerous corkscrew fish, with which the creeks abounded, and having fixed his proboscis firmly into a corked bottle, Nutt showed Miss Marchmont how the fish with the leverage of his tail could speedily open their modest bottle of St. Æmilion. Grace, who appeared to have unknown resources at her command—

Fœmina multa facere scit,

offered before and during the meal to give Nutt pepper; *but he* declined it on account of the trouble it would

have caused her. The turtle's eggs were delicious. The salad made from the rare grasses of the island excellent, and a whale happening to swim within stone's throw of the island served them (for he was soon dispatched by Nutt) with oil enough, when gently strained through a cullender of dried grass, interwoven with twigs, for six weeks' salad and a month's lamps; but this latter was not required, as they found gas on the island in large quantities, the pipes being naturally formed by hollow bamboo canes from tree to tree and rock to rock, which gave on a dark night the effect of a thousand additional lamps lit in the well-wooded inclosure.

During the meal Grace started up, and exclaimed that the last bottle of St. Æmilion had been lost in the wreck of the house.

"Let us look about us," said Nutt, "perhaps we may find a substitute." After a few minutes' search he came back, radiant with smiles, and bearing in his hand a flowering shrub of a most peculiar description. Its roots grew out above ground, deriving apparently its life from the various suckers which shot themselves out into the air while its leaves and branches had spread and flourished underneath the earth, affording shelter to a variety of insects of a genus between avis and scarabæus.

"This will serve us, Miss Marchmont," Nutt said, "for at all events one sort of beverage for this evening. From it I shall distil a sweet and potent spirit, dear to sailors on board ship. It is at once invigorating, supporting, and refreshing."

"Do sailors grow it in Benicia or England?" inquired Grace.

"I am not aware," he answered, "that the plant itself has been much cultivated in either place, though the taste for the liquor obtains in most of our northern civilised countries. The beverage so decocted is entitled rum."

"How strange!" exclaimed Miss Marchmont, as she examined the stem and leaves of Nutt's prize, "how little do we know of nature's provisions! What an extraordinary sample of vegetation!"

"Yes," answered Nutt, "you have now seen the——"

"RUM SHRUB."

After this Nutt made a decoction, and, when they had finished dinner, they sat down happily with a bottle of the new-made liquor between them. Ah! what a paradise to one of them!

As he was raising his glass to his mouth for the fourth time, Grace started up, and seizing his arm——

CHAPTER XXI.

SAID in a gentle but firm tone, "You have exceeded the allowance you made me by three. Let us be upon an equality," so saying she took the bottle from him, and poured the remainder of the liquid into her own glass. Then he made a fresh decoction of the Rum Shrub. This they drank gratefully, gazing meantime out upon the distant sea. They discoursed at intervals upon all their hairbreadth escapes, but neither hinted at the possibility of their return to the shores they had quitted.

At last Grace said, thoughtfully, more as if considering a problem within herself than addressing an observation to her companion, "Can't intelligence be diffused?"

He stared at her. She repeated her question. Then he made another quart of the beverage they had been drinking, and while she sat there communing with herself, drank it.

Then he began to talk.

"'Th' Lectry Trelgrar wufful 'vention," he began, in a voice so little resembling his own, that it was now *her* turn to stare at him in mute surprise.

He continued. "If we'd lectry Trelgrar here we send say where were, bus sno Leckstrelgrar, thingspossil."

"Thing is *what?*" she inquired, with a look of angelic reproach.

He slowly closed his right eye, which was turned towards her, and shook his head as he repeated, "I shay things spossil."

"'The thing is impossible,' do you mean *that*, Mr. Nutt?" she asked.

He laughed, and then became suddenly grave. He attempted to rise from his chair, which seemed to slip away from under him, and in another moment he was prostrate beneath the table.

He told her afterwards that he then experienced a sweet delirium, which seemed to him like the poetry of motion going the wrong way.

She knelt by his side, being nigh heartbroken. What, after all their toils and danger was it to come to this?

What was she to do?

Had *he* been in *her* place, she thought, what would *he* have done? Certainly not have sat there idle, uselessly bemoaning the past, regardless alike of present and future.

He slept for three hours, and she sat by him, keeping watch. 'Twas all she could do.

At last he woke confused, giddy, with a splitting headache and a dry distasteful tongue.

"Why am I not walking about?" he inquired.

With her ready woman's wit, she replied, "Because you are lying down."

"I will take that for an answer," he said, sadly.

"You are under my orders now," she said, playfully, "*and as your* doctor, I forbid you to rise."

He wished to hear what prescription this young physician would recommend, and finding that she had none to suggest, he asked her with some curiosity what was that leaf with which she was playing at that moment. She did not know, but was able to tell him that she had gathered it from a tall tree on the Island.

"We are indeed fortunate, Miss Marchmont," said Nutt. "This tree is one of the rare productions of the tropics, and is nature's own provision for the parched and weary traveller. It was doubtless overhanging a clear running stream of no great depth."

"It was," she answered, unable to restrain her evident admiration of his apparently unlimited resources.

"I thought so," he returned. "It is the Soda-water tree; squeeze one of those lemons, which you will find growing in large quantities close at hand, into a tumbler, with a spoonful of this powdered sugar, which I have luckily preserved in my pocket-book, and it will, I know from experience, produce the desired effect."

She complied with his request, but she saw, though he whistled and hooray'd whenever she approached, that the pain in his head was not yet overcome.

He drank the soda-water and took the lemons, and though still feverish he was enabled by these stimulants to give his mind to the great problem which he had been engaged upon when he fell ill.

In the afternoon she left him for a while, and returned joyfully with two large dressed crabs which she had found apparently just about to undress themselves (as is their wont, Nutt explained to her, in these hot climates, and therefore she was to esteem herself fortunate in

arriving so opportunely) in a cool cave upon the sea-shore.

The sun shone upon them brightly and burningly hot. With a portion of Nutt's ingenuity she had plucked up one of the large tropical mushrooms to serve her as a sunshade, while the next size to it she planted carefully over her patient's aching head.

"Do you think," he asked, presently, "that your friends will ever come in search of you?"

"They may," she replied. "But if they do not, it would be pleasant to get somebody to call here, even if only to have a little music in the evening."

She felt, immediately the words were out of her mouth, that the speech was an unkind one. She placed her hand in his, and said simply, "I did not mean that—I am very happy here."

Then he saw his duty plainly, and set himself to do it.

His duty was to let anyone and everyone know that he was with a young lady alone on an island.

He was puzzled, and looked at her inquiringly.

"No cards," she murmured sadly, and she thought to herself, "are not these words in the marriage service?"

"Friends at a distance will please accept this notice," he said, as if in reply to her thinking aloud.

A sharp crisp note from a bird struck on their ears.

Nutt turned, and looking upwards saw a bright red breasted puffy little bird, not unlike a bull-finch, perched on a branch.

He rose excitedly. "The problem is solved," he cried. "This is the bird for us. The salt! Miss Marchmont, *for pity's sake*, the salt!"

She brought it to him, and they both approached the bird cautiously. His object was to climb the tree without disturbing the pretty little warbler. It was a difficult matter, but he succeeded to admiration.

Grace Marchmont stood transfixed to the spot in breathless suspense. Another second, and the saline grains were sprinkled sharply upon his tail, and he fell as she had seen the Pangofflins fall under the same influence at sea.

"The bird is stunned, not dead," explained Nutt, "when he wakes up he will be our messenger. He has served numbers of people before this time, and, even in the most civilised countries, where the invention of the Electric Telegraph has in a measure superseded that of writing, the bird is still the vehicle of communication between various parties who find this means most suitable for their purpose."

"And yet," Grace said, "it is not a pigeon."

"It is not, Miss Marchmont, and herein lies its peculiarity. It is——"

"What?"

"A ROUND ROBIN!"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

THE Boomerang (whom we indeed need no longer distinguish by this name) next proceeded to dry some leaves in the sun, and having in the course of his rambles found a cedar tree and a vein of lead, he at once constructed a couple of pencils, marked respectively H and B, with which, however, he was not satisfied, and so waited patiently until the evening, when he observed to Grace, she would see what she should then and there behold.

As she implored him to let her be of some use, he asked her to gather for him a number of white ferns resembling feathers, while he was engaged in fashioning a kind of awkward boot out of the turtle-fins.

When she returned laden she saw to her surprise that he had fitted these fins on to his feet, and was practising a sort of step which he had often seen the soldiers at home doing in the barrack-yard or on the common at drill.

Without a question, for she had implicit trust in his wisdom, she gave him the ferns, and assisted him to tie them, and otherwise fasten them all about his body until he was completely covered. Then he stooped his body, *and elevated* his neck, and in this guise, and this

attitude, repeated the step she had already seen him practising.

"Oh, you old goose!" she exclaimed, with an amused air.

Nutt was delighted. "I have deceived *you*," he said, "with this disguise, and if I can deceive the birds who have no reason to guide them to a conclusion, my object will be gained. The step I was practising when you saw me was—

"THE GOOSE STEP."

Then he departed and hid himself like a goose by the side of the small pond, where all such fowl used to come down on an evening, to drink.

At first the birds were somewhat shy of him, and hissed at him as if not liking his performance, but after a while they made friends with him, when indeed he took an unfair advantage of their amiability, and seizing three of them by their necks dragged them from the pond. These supplied him with quills.

Ink was wanting, and, strange to say, once again he returned to the pond, only this time at night.

A fine black swan rewarded his efforts, whose blood furnished him with a rich, clear, indelible ink.

Then they sat down to a delicious supper of stewed eels, fried eels, eels in pies, and eels in every form, which the care and forethought of Grace had provided. After this he wrote these words on the white paper, which he had made of leaves:—

Mr. Nutt and Miss Marchmont present their compliments to Mr. and Mrs. World and his Wife, and will be happy to see them at No. 42 *Longitude* and No. 20 Lati-

tude, first turning to the right in the Pacific Ocean, any day during this or the next year. Dinners always ready. Supper at 11. *Ships to set down at Turtle Point, and take up at Corkscrew-fish Corner.*

This they tied to the Round Robin, with which, and its own notes, he flew away.

Then a great notion occurred to Nutt.

He cut down a tree, and out of its trunk he made a strong post. This he set up in the middle of the island. He then told Miss Marchmont to write letters to her various friends, which she did, and he took them to this Post. As he always *passed it*, letters in hand, he could (as indeed he did) on his return tell her that "her letters had *gone by*" this post.

It gave her occupation while Nutt was engaged in his grander effort. The eels for supper had suggested to him a grand, a colossal idea—if it could be only carried out. He procured four black boards and a piece of chalk. These boards he erected in various corners of the island, visible from the ocean. On each of them was written in legible characters,

EEL PIE ISLAND. EEL PIES ALWAYS READY.
REAL TURTLE IN EVERY FORM.
GREEN FAT.
ICED PUNCH AND CHOICE OLD MADEIRA.

*** Parties attended. Turtle sent to any quarter of the Globe. Apply here, on the premises, to Miss Marchmont or Mr. Nutt.

Upon the third day after these had been up Grace drew Nutt's attention to a dusky speck upon the horizon. *He gazed anxiously*, at last he cried in an excited tone—

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN OLD FRIEND.

THE hand which had griped Piel Dornton round the ancle was not to be shaken off easily.

Bess failed to take advantage of his helpless position, and was only too glad to welcome Joseph, as the young man sprang up, through the hole in the earth, from the cavern where he had been secreted. He had been climbing the cliffs, in the pursuit of his usual occupation, when his attention had been arrested by the girl's cry for assistance, and he had at once dashed into the recess and so gained the entrance.

"Piel Dornton," said the young sailor, "this is *my* betrothed. You have riches, no matter how you came by them, you have houses and lands, but dare to injure so much as a hair of the head of this trembling girl, and your sacred calling shall prove no protection to you, for as sure as the Eyrie's eggs are nothing other than the eggs of the Eyrie; so surely will that moment be your last, and by my hand, Piel Dornton!"

The young man's eyes dilated, and his cheek flushed as he gave utterance to his pent-up feelings.

The clergyman was foiled. He did not at once see his plan of action.

"The old boy," he said coarsely, "will soon pop off."

Bess was hardened to most things, but this allusion to her father came so sharply and rudely upon her ear, that for a moment she could only attempt to gather his meaning.

"Do you wish to see him?" asked Joseph.

"I do," replied Piel Dornton, savagely. "You shall have his last word, ay, if it be the last he should speak on this earth, for the solemn promise he made me. Your triumph will be short, young man. Come, come!"

They descended the hill.

Still following in his track came the Child of Destiny.

"He is mine! mine!" he whispered to himself.

A light shone from the cottage window as they tapped at the door.

Piel Dornton grasped his pistol.

In another moment a gaunt spectral form partly appeared from the inner chamber, and rising from the low pallet——

CHAPTER XXIV.

BROKEN TIES.

THE old man cried feebly,

"The papers! the papers!"

Piel Dornton held Joseph by the arm for a moment.

"What papers?" he inquired.

Joseph answered him with a low laugh and an extension motion of peculiar import which he had learnt when in the Benician militia.

Piel Dornton was a bold bad man, but even bold bad men must sometimes shudder. He shuddered.

Taking the advantage thus offered him, Joseph shook him off and descended the staircase.

On his way out he passed a crouching form in a dark corner. That form was *his* good genius; it was Dornton's evil genius. The Infant.

It was a rugged and perilous descent down the steepest part of the cliff to where the papers were hidden in a hole in the rock.

He looked over the edge, and saw a white strip fluttering in the breeze. In an instant he had decided.

While Joseph was thus engaged Piel Dornton was alone with Old Martin, for Bess, seeing that her father was unable any longer to go out fishing for a livelihood (*he had always* caught one previously in the neighbour-

hood) had taken his boat, and nets, and bait carefully preserved in moss, and had gone out to win the support which was needed for their evening meal and the next day's dinner.

Piel Dornton was alone with Old Martin.

"The papers!" shouted Piel Dornton in the dying man's ear.

"Don't! Don't!" said Old Martin, who was sinking fast, getting under the bed clothes and kicking feebly.

Seeing this muscular demonstration, Piel Dornton, who, as has already been shown, was something of a physician, at once saw that he was near his last. A bucket was in the room, used probably for the preservation of the fish after they'd been caught: this he carefully removed from within reach of the old man's feet.

"Now then!" he exclaimed, lugging him from underneath the blanket by the hair of his head.

"Don't hurt a poor old man," urged Martin, cowering again from the expected blow.

"I won't!" returned Piel; "but tell me what was in those papers, or I'll choke you."

In vain poor Martin tried to turn it off as a jest; in vain he tried to eke out the few hours intervening before his child's return. Piel Dornton knew his own game too well: he was inexorable.

"The papers," whimpered the venerable invalid, "were left here by my brother's family solicitor, who ran away and was never heard of more. They attest the right of my daughter to a baronetcy of fifty millions per annum. *That is what is* the matter."

"*You lie!*" roared Dornton.

"I don't! indeed I don't," cried the unfortunate old man, disappearing beneath the counterpane just in time to avoid the blow with the fire-shovel which Piel Dornton aimed at his head. Then he fired his pistols about the room and strode from the cottage.

Dogged by his evil genius: at a distance.

He came to the edge, and looked over.

Joseph was below, with his head in the hole, getting something.

In another moment the watcher above saw what it was.

The papers! in *his* hand!

"Give them up!" he shouted.

"Never!" returned Joseph, clinging to the white strip which hung between him and destruction.

The sea beneath roared for its prey.

"One more chance I give you," said Piel, quietly opening a clasp knife.

"I will accept no chances at your hands," replied the brave youth.

Piel Dornton severed the tie.

The sea roared and bounded against the yellow rocks with joy. It had received its prey.

CHAPTER XXV.

NETT PROFIT.

TEN miles out at sea sat Bess Martin laboriously toiling. No fish, except a few of those hybrids between bird of the night and flying-fish, intitled Tittlebats, had come to her net. She thought of her father, she thought of everything and everybody.

Then she felt a jerk at her floats. The net bobbed, it was as much as she could do to hold it. At last, after much struggling, she hauled it into the boat. At first, by the light of the crescent moon, it was difficult to see what monstrous creature this was, twirling among the hooks.

At last, as the clouds cleared off, and the moon again shone forth, the night was as clear as a summer's day.

Then she clasped her hands above her head. In the net was a man writhing.

"Joseph!!" she exclaimed.

He tore through the cords which held him, and telling her of Piel Dornton's dastardly attempt, pressed her to his arms.

"Saved! saved!" she exclaimed.

He would have returned to shore at once with the *papers, which* they then examined carefully, but unfor*tunately to very* little purpose, neither of them having had

those extra advantages of education which include a towel, spoon, and fork, and the alphabet, in at all events its ordinary form, exclusive of capital letters.

They wept; tears of joy.

Then said she, "You must not return; he will kill you."

"If he will do that, I will *not* return," he said, boldly.

"But where is a place of safety?" he asked.

She shook her head.

A light streamed across the ocean.

"Ha!" she exclaimed. "I see it."

"So do I," said Joseph.

In a second it struck them both.

To the Lighthouse!

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PENDENTE LITE.

SHE shut her lover into the Lighthouse and returned.

This proceeding had been watched by Piel Dornton by the aid of his powerful stethoscope.

"She must be mine," he exclaimed. The prospect of the baronetcy and the millions had entirely absorbed him.

But the papers. How to obtain them?

Joseph would not part with them, and without them —— stay! The girl's claim existed—that was a fact, at all events. One set of papers attesting the fact was as good as another.

Old Martin was dead, at least so he believed, and for the first time he regretted an act which had deprived him of the only person capable of giving him any information.

"Just like me," he said to himself, remorsefully. "Always choking, or shooting somebody. I must give it up."

Ah, Piel Dornton, would you could even then have acted upon this call of conscience. But he stifled it.

"The girl!" he said, suddenly. "Bess can tell me."

He ran to the cottage.

She was gone.

He searched the house. Old Martin was gone: not a trace of him.

"I must have shot him, thoroughly," he muttered to himself. "Blown him quite away!"

He was silent for one second: then he fired off a pistol.

Roused by this, he saw but one course before him.

"She has gone to the Lighthouse," he thought, "to join *him*. I can produce papers as good as theirs, ha! ha!" and he laughed fiendishly at the recollection of the documents to which Chekk, Diss, Count & Co. had given their respectable attestation.

'Twas all clear now.

"I can succeed without them," he said, and waved his hat in triumph.

From the shelf he took a box of matches, which would only ignite when you didn't want them, or on other solemn occasions, and he proceeded by the secret pass among the rocks to where his small canoe was always kept, ready, if need were, for instantaneous escape.

Seizing the paddle, which in this boat, being his own property, he always worked himself, he glided noiselessly towards the Lighthouse.

A voice from an upper window asked, "Is that you, Bess?"

It was Joseph's and came as a revelation to him. *She* was not there.

"Will you give me those papers?" he asked, pitching his voice as high as it could go. 'Twas not like *Elizabeth's*; Love knew the difference.

"Go away!" exclaimed Joseph, with real aversion. "I have nothing for you."

"Then perish," exclaimed Dornton, savagely, and applied a lighted match to the base of the Lighthouse.

Creeping, curling, slowly, certainly upward, the flame took its way.

In and out of the waterbutt, round the stones, through the wainscot, crept the cruel unerring fire.

Joseph instinctively dreaded something, but he only felt a sudden warmth, for which he was unable to account.

Piel Dornton returned to the shore, and landing opposite Phlebosco Palace, summoned his confidential servant.

"Is your mistress within?" he asked.

"Lady Anna is asleep, your reverence," was the reply.

"'Tis well," he returned. "Loose the bloodhound."

The confidential servant did so.

"Unmuzzle him," said Piel Dornton.

"My lord," exclaimed the wretched man, "I cannot."

"Obey my behest," thundered his master, "or by heaven——"

The man staggered back. The ball had entered his head.

It was a thoughtless act, and one of which even he, in his calmer moments, would not have been guilty.

Aroused by the noise, the Lady Anna stood behind *him.*

"*Piel!*" she said, tenderly.

"*I cannot* stop now," was his rough answer. "I am

going out hunting. Don't whine—don't mope—go to—— bed."

She looked at him searchingly. So changed! He who owed so much to her, which only they two knew.

But she feared to rupture the one silken cord still between them, and turning on her heel waltzed into the house.

Once within, she opened a secret door, and out stepped the Infant-watcher.

"You say you are devoted to me," she said to the Infant, who bowed. "I believe you: follow him, and let me know the result." The Infant stole out upon the track.

"She is treacherous," said Piel Dornton, as he stood alone in the courtyard. "She cannot deceive *me* with these gay steps! I must be free of her." So saying, he unmuzzled the hound, and mounting upon his spotted steed, followed in the track.

Till he came up with Bess: for the hound was sure and safe, and held her till he arrived, when he enticed him away and secured the girl.

"I am thy lover," he hissed in her ear. "I love you madly."

The word made her tremble. She felt the force of this description of his wild and lawless passion.

"I will give thee gems, and jewels, and riches, diamonds, and a title, aye, and a house in the Vast Metropolis far from here, within the shades of square-graced Hanover."

"But Joseph——" she exclaimed, "what of him?"

"Of him!" cried Dornton, "see!"

The sky was illumined with a fearful glow. He gave her his glass, and through it she saw the Lighthouse in flames : in flames which were chasing a running frightened figure with papers in its hands up the iron stairs.

The entire lower part of the Lighthouse was consumed, not one brick or stone or stick left to tell its fearful tale. Only the upper part remained, which was fast becoming enveloped in the arms of the raging, devouring element. The glass was the old powerful one of Piel's, and brought the object so near that she stopped her ears, lest the perishing creature's cries should pierce them. Then as the flames reached the last point, the very top of the Lighthouse, all beneath having fallen and crumbled entirely away, they saw the form of a man tying some papers to his belt, and as the trembling support gave way beneath his feet, they saw him distinctly, with one tremendous leap, plunge headforemost into the dark and angry sea below.

Then she fainted.

In his power now, placed across his horse to escape detection, he galloped with her to their new destination.

In the meantime strange events were happening in Old Martin's cottage.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BROTHERS.

STRUGGLING, battling manfully with the waves beating upon the lower rocks beneath Old Martin's cottage, came ashore, upon the eventful evening which has occupied the last few chapters, the body of a man, old before his time, grasping in his right hand a bottle and a lump of sugar.

He lay for some seconds extended upon the beach, until another wave more furious than that which had stranded him, turned him and tossed him over, like a giant at play with an empty butter-cask, and giving him as it were a last kick, retired again into his ocean cave, drawing in his breath with a chuckling roar over the broken state of his old toy.

'Twas the sea's last effort, a grand one, and then it began retreating, like a cowardly giant as it was, to go and play with huge ships for shuttlecocks and vast rocks for marbles on the other side of the world.

The form on the beach moved, stretched, and finally sat upright: a bottle in one hand, a lump of sugar in the other.

"Confound them for a couple of idiots! Commit me to the sea when they hadn't given themselves or me, for *the matter of that*, time to know whether I was dead or

not!" muttered the figure in a grumbling tone. Then he poured three drops of "stuff," as it was labelled, upon a lump of sugar, and placing the latter in his mouth, soon appeared much invigorated.

"A murrain on the jade!" he exclaimed, trying to rise, "an she hath not given me cramps and agues, and a tertian, it may hap enough to last me till next Martinmas, may I never crush cup or demolish pasty more."

Rising with some difficulty, the Lieutenant, for, as our readers have probably already divined, it was indeed he, commenced the ascent of the crag overhead.

"Come, Martinmas!" he said to himself, "odd that the name of Martin should occur to me now. My poor brother! But for a quarrel about some wretched property and a title (may all ill light upon such causes of disagreement!) we should have been living together now, and he would perhaps have been an Admiral."

The past seemed like a dream to him: Nutt, Grace, the Pangofflins, the fatal sugar, the Castor oil, all had passed away like the fashions of a kaleidoscope. It was evident to him that while in a trance they had, as we, being truthful historians, have stated in another place, committed him early on the fifth morning of their floating-house voyage to an ocean grave, which is as much as to say they pitched him over. And we added, "interred him decently;" that is, as it were, turned him out well, as became a faithful niece and attached servant. So as he strode up the crag the thought recurred to him, and *he questioned* in his heart the treatment he had received *at their hands*.

"Pitched over! Turned out!" he went on, harping upon these grievances until the balmy air of morn, stealing from the far west, crept in among his grey hairs and whispered peace.

A harmony as from another world seemed round about his head.

He clasped his hands, and with a smiling self-devotion looked upwards as he murmured softly, so softly, to himself,

"A singing! in my ears! Ah! happy childhood!"

Then in reverent spirit he doffed that weather-beaten hat, and moved in a gay and stately manner, reminding the looker-on of the expressive joyous occasion of an old Castilian, whose blue blood would have been stirred by the sight of some wild deeds of chivalry, or some Moorish dogs biting the dust before the sainted banner of Compostella.

A looker-on *did* see him.

An old man above, from a window where he had crept to see "the blessed sun before life ebbed."

He could only feebly breathe "Hi!"

The sound attracted the Lieutenant's attention.

He ran towards the door.

It was Martin's cottage.

He lifted the latch, and quick as lightning threw the bottle towards the sinking figure, who, guarding his head by the instinct which even men in the last stage have of self-preservation, seized it, and drained it to the dregs.

The morning sun shone in.

"My preserver!" exclaimed old Martin, rushing madly towards the Lieutenant.

"My life preserver!" ejaculated the Lieutenant, feeling in the vest of his uniform.

Within an inch of each other both started back.

"It cannot be!" was their one exclamation.

Then Martin, holding off from the other at a foot's length, stared straight in his face, and asked rapidly,

"Charles Augustus Leonard?"

And the other replied with an interrogatory:

"Matthew Marmaduke Martin?"

The two old men were in each other's arms.

"My brother! my dear brother!" each cried.

In that moment all was forgotten and forgiven. Explanations quickly followed, and Martin, or as we must now call him, Matthew Marmaduke Martin Marchmont, put it clearly to the Lieutenant, his elder brother, how when they had both married, he had never intended to hurt his feelings by taking the girl who should have been his brother Charles's bride; while a similar assurance on the part of Augustus Leonard soon cleared the veil of doubt and mystery from the heart of the younger, though now old, Martin.

One other explanation.

Charles Leonard asked,

"How is my daughter?"

Old Martin replied, trembling.

"Charles, she thought me dead, a villain has her in his power, but I dare say Joseph, her lover, will find her."

Then it was Old Martin's turn to ask,

"How is *my* daughter?"

"*Grace is lost* at sea," was the Lieutenant's hurried reply. "*The* young scapegrace buried me; but if we

take a ship (you want a little change of air, so do I), I dare say we shall find her somewhere about the Pacific."

For each old man had, out of revenge, in early days, stolen the other's daughter when a child; and the one Grace, had been brought up as Charles Marchmont's niece, as indeed she was; while the other was called Old Martin's daughter, as indeed she wasn't.

"The first thing then is," said the Lieutenant,

"To get——"

"A SHIP."

* * * * * *

They had been at sea three days,

These two old men.

"Steer to the right, Marmaduke Matthew Martin, will you?" said the Lieutenant.

"I will NOT, Augustus Leonard Charles," was his stern relation's return.

"If you don't," retorted Augustus Leonard, irritably, "I'll break your old head."

"Break my old head, you——"

Angry words might have followed but for the intervention of Commander Bouncer, a veteran Horse Marine, who had been in the service ever since that peculiar branch of it had been first organised, and who had kindly undertaken the conduct of this expedition.

"Hold hard!" said Commander Bouncer.

His ship, by the way, which before was called the *Gemini*, had now been re-christened the *Penelope Anne*, owner, Knox.

"Don't let's have no rumpus," was the Commander's homely advice.

The old men wept in each other's arms.

"Now then," said the Commander, "you two go up aloft, one on the mast-head, 'tother on the jib-boom, and keep a look out."

Away they went up the rigging..

Then they sailed on, the Commander steering.

On the sixth day, the two old men never having moved from their position, the loblolly boy caught a fish which was hauled upon deck. The fish was a flying one apparently, but on opening it they found it had swallowed a small fat bird, whose wings were sticking out.

On this bird was a card of invitation.

It was the Round Robin.

On it was Miss Marchmont's name.

Then the sailors hoorayed for joy, and the Lieutenant gave them three pound six and eightpence halfpenny all round, and entered it all in his private account book with a share of three-quarters of the whole sum down to his brother, to be repaid when he came into his fortune.

Then the Commander liquored up freely, and the two old men wept again in each other's arms.

Then they thought they saw something.

They sailed to the right, according to the direction on the card, and within a few hours, the Commander taking a second and a stiffer glass, made out

EEL PIE ISLAND, AND GREEN FAT.

Then the sailors cheered the Lieutenant, who bowed courteously from the masthead, and distributed sovereigns among the men, who had already begun to pity the poor old gentleman as a harmless lunatic not very *distantly related* to the Flying Dutchman.

So they sailed on. Martin at the prow, Bouncer at the helm, the Lieutenant, like the good Cherub, smiling aloft, and keeping watch on the life of poor Jack below; then onward sped that good ship, the *Penelope Anne*.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"MINE FOR EVER!"

THE waves which had received Joseph when he leapt from the burning height extinguished such flames as had already caught his dress, and carried him to shore.

Thence, after inquiry at Martin's hut, who had by that time departed with the Lieutenant, he at once betook himself to town, trusting to the information which he was able to gather on the road from those who had seen Piel Dornton galloping towards the metropolis with a fair burden laid across the horse, as to where Bessy was imprisoned.

At first he thought that the best method was to call upon the Lord Chancellor, and obtain some letters dimissory or a mandamus; but on second thoughts he gave up this plan as involving too great a waste of time and money.

He soon began to be aware of several people in disguise following him wherever he went, and once coming round a corner sharply when he was evidently supposed to have gone the other way, he discovered a middle-aged man taking off a false nose and a pair of coloured spectacles.

This alarmed him, and in future he only ventured out *at night.*

One evening he was in St. James's Park when a gentlemanly man accosted him, asking him if he wanted "a little dawg."

Something about his interrogator's appearance attracted him, and he was led, contrary to his usual custom, to enter into a conversation with the man, and while so engaged they drew near the small summer-house which was built for the sole use of Royalty some years ago, and which is still a show-place for our country cousins, with its grotesque pictures, its rich velvet-covered sofas, and Dutch mantel-pieces carved over with the conquests of the Regent, a special attraction perhaps being that the entrance is gratis, and it can only be seen on certain days in the year, such days being, among others, if we remember right, the twenty-ninth of September, the first of April, the glorious thirty-first of June, and the annual commemoration on the same day in November.

Hence it was not astonishing that Joseph, new to London as he was, should have expressed his curiosity to visit the interior of the Royal Arbour.

The man had the pass-key and admitted him. Joseph sat down to admire wonders in art quite new to him.

It was a hot day, and he complained of thirst. His new acquaintance, who appeared to be a sort of a metropolitan farmer, offered to procure him a delicious draught of curds and whey straight from the cow.

Joseph accepted, and in another second he was alone.

He felt in his pocket for the papers, and cursing his own stupidity in not having secreted them carefully before, he now, with a dim intuitive perception of coming danger, sewed them into the heels of his boots.

Scarcely had he taken this precaution when the man reappeared, bearing a bowl of the grateful beverage.

After this Joseph knew no more. He drank, and fell insensible.

The full-length portrait of the Ranger opened, and a tall man in a mask appeared, accompanied by two others in cloaks.

"Bear him away at once," said the tallest of the masks, in a tone of imperious command.

"Where to, Master Dornton?" inquired the man who had administered the potion.

"Silence, fool!" thundered Dornton, for the Mask was he. "Your incautious folly may ruin us."

"I beg your honour's pardon," replied the man, surlily.

"Hold your confounded tongue, Jeremy," said the younger and shorter Mask, "if you can, or I'll shoot you as I would a dog."

"Nay," interposed the third, who was stouter and of a more noble bearing. "Poor Jeremy means no harm. What say you, Captain Dornton, whither shall the carrion be borne?"

Piel Dornton paused, then in a gloomy voice he gave the command—

"To the Black Mine of Cwmdgrwrr. Away!"

They bore his body among them, Piel Dornton controlling their movements with a sixteen-chambered revolver, which he ever and anon pointed from one to *another* as occasion seemed to require.

To the Black Mine of Cwmdgrwrr, in Cornwall.

Then, as they closed the door and departed, he threw aside his disguise.

"I breathe again," he cried. "Mine! Mine for ever!"

Then he went to Hanover square.

HANOVER SQUARE!!

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BLUSH ROSE PATTERN.

In an elegant apartment in Hanover Square sat Elizabeth, the supposed daughter of Old Martin. She was a prisoner, to all intents and purposes a prisoner, as much as the statue of George Canning, which looked sadly down upon the ancient pump below, as if, though they had both been there for years, no one had ever yet had the civility to ask him to take a drop.

Blackly looked the statue on poor Bessy as she walked to the window.

She tried to amuse herself with books; but she could not read. The piano was her only resource: she was entirely ignorant of the practical science of music, and did not know one note from another, but she swept her hands indiscriminately over the keys, and made such music as perhaps few, even proficient in the art, could have heard unmoved.

Then she surveyed the apartment. It was a gorgeously furnished room. Chairs of various ornamentation, with figures of sea gods and small fishes stood out in bold relief, showing the seats to have been constructed less *for utilitarian* than decorative purposes.

The carpet was a rich heavy cut pile of a strange

pattern. In the centre was a large circle, and in the centre of this ring a blush rose.

This attracted her attention, and though she could not in the least understand the train of thought, she could not help connecting this rose somehow or another with the memory of her, to her, lost Joseph.

The door opened, and Piel Dornton, in an evening dress of the height of fashion, with large white tie, high-collars and tail coat that swept the floor, entered gaily.

"Do not approach me," said Bessy, flying to the bell-rope.

"Nay, pretty flutterer," said Piel, smiling, "the bells will not serve thee any more than will those they summon. They are dummies."

"But your servants?" inquired Bess, sharply.

"I have none here but dumb-waiters," was the cold cutting response. "Come," he continued, "enough of this prudery. Life was made for love and pleasure; see where the banquet is prepared," and drawing aside a heavy drapery, he discovered to her astonished gaze a table covered with a profusion of delicacies, including nuts from Brazil, and oranges from sweet Seville, with bottles of the richest home-made wines and ices, which could not have cost less than one penny each. Then soft music began to play, and Piel watched its effect upon her with evident satisfaction.

She permitted him to take her hand.

To lead her towards the banquet.

She trembled: soft aromatic vapours were wafted across the room, and she sank upon a sofa, feeling that

her will was becoming powerless in the hands of this terrible being.

"Joseph!" she murmured.

"Bah!" exclaimed Piel. "Think not of him. He has neglected you: he is toying at this moment with some lead-begrimed miner's daughter."

"Has he indeed sunk so low?" asked, in a subdued tone, Bess, whose last remembrance of her lover was as he leapt from the burning Lighthouse.

"He has," replied Piel Dornton, feeling that the fewer words he used the more powerful would be their force.

"So much beneath my level?" she continued, more to herself than him.

"Sixteen thousand feet beneath the level of the sea," returned Piel, gaily. "Come, he is unworthy of you. To the banquet. Let us drink his health." So saying, he filled a jewelled goblet to the brim, and as the beads sparkled and twinkled on the bosom of the wine of Ginger, he cried aloud, "Joseph, to you I drink: gallant knight, who would protect thy mistress! ha! ha! Joseph, upon my word, I should like to see you here!"

"YOU SHALL!" exclaimed a voice. It came apparently from

The Blush Rose in the centre of the Carpet.

In another instant the pattern had opened, and shot up by some unseen force, Joseph stood before them.

Dornton discharged all his barrels at him as he rose, but with such violence was the impetus from below given *that Joseph* passed through the air almost to the ceiling, *and down* again, before the practised marksman's eye

could settle upon any one point where he could, with anything like certainty, direct his aim.

Bessy ran to him, and clung to him, in his dirty miner's dress as he was.

"Piel Dornton, I come to fetch my bride. Do not stir a step—let us understand each other." Dornton listened doggedly.

"You want the papers which I possess."

"I do."

"Good: you shall have them."

"How?"

"No matter."

"Where?"

"Here."

"Who?"

"I."

"Stay."

"Yes."

"WHEN?"

"Now!"

"Or Wait——"

"Till You get them?"

"No."

"There."

"Ah!"

And with this he drew from his boots the long coveted prize. Piel tore them open, and it was evident that he had immediately hit upon an important discovery.

"Is this true?" he asked.

"*It is.*"

"What?" asked Bess.

"No matter," replied Joseph.

"Yes, it *does* matter," answered Piel, "*I* will tell her. *You are* NOT *the Heiress to the Baronetcy, and will* NOT *come* into the *Thirteen Million.*"

"Who said I would?" asked Bess, incredulously.

"He thought so," explained Joseph. "And, do you know more than this, you are not—

"Old Martin's daughter."

Bess fainted.

"I leave her in your hands," said Piel, hastily. "Take her and be happy. There is a supper and excellent wine, and gold pins for the crustacea. My work lies in another place."

Joseph drew back from his proffered hand, and cursing the Miner's pride, he strode from the room.

When Bessy revived he told her how he had been immured in a mine in Cornwall, and how he had dug his way, wearing out his hands and teeth for her, until he had found the subterranean route to her present abode.

Then he took a bath, and having discovered a rich suit of clothes, he returned to her gaily.

When she heard that she was the daughter of Lieutenant Marchmont, she at once proposed to find him out, and join him and her sister.

"Or, if not," she said to Joseph, "that bold bad man will marry her, as he has already tried to marry me."

"You are right: at any cost we will go."

So these two set out upon their journey, and finding *from inquiry* at the various coasts that Old Martin, who *was very well* known everywhere, had sailed away with a

strange gentleman (for Lieutenant Marchmont, from his long residence in Benicia, had been quite forgotten by the good inhabitants of the fishing villages), they took the first steamer, leaving England, for Captain Bouncer's course, which he had declared before sailing to the look-out clerk at the Storm Signal Office. They sailed in haste, with all steam up, in the wake of the good ship, *Penelope Anne.*

While she was getting under weigh the partners in the bank of Chekk, Diss, Count and Co., Benicia, were engaged on a scrutiny not wholly unconnected with the present *dramatis personæ.*

A strange Child, scarcely as tall as the money-shovel if upright, called upon Mr. Snagg, the Chief Clerk.

Mr. Snagg was in bed, but as the Infant was importunate, the old man-of-business deemed that, in the interest of his employers, he had better see him.

The result of the interview was, that Mr. Snagg at once ran down to the office and summoned the three partners.

The four (the Child waiting anxiously without) commenced a rigid inquiry into the title-deeds, contracts, and all law papers, bonds, scrip, shares, and debentures held by their estimable client Piel Dornton.

In an hour's time the Child was on his way to Phlebosco Palace, and was standing before the Lady Anna Domino, who was writing a letter. He regarded her lovingly. "I don't like to hurt her, but *he's* a villain—he's a bad 'un. I will."

This he said to himself, and then she turned and addressed him.

"You have seen my hus——. Your master?" she inquired.

"I have."

"And he is—— "

"Don't ask me," said the poor boy, "I'll do anything to save *you*—I would, indeed, I would."

And he shouted and screamed, and laid hold of her dress, and whined, and wriggled in his deep despair.

"You are the only cove who's ever been kind to me," he said to her. "And for your sake—— "

"Hush!" she said, gently pushing him through a pane of glass into the garden.

Then she thought for a few minutes. "The end must come," she said, presently, to herself. "Let it: take these packets to your master."

The Child, who had returned, pulled a lock of his shaggy hair, and quitted the house.

Immediately, upon the doorstep, he was seized by a rough hand.

"Come with me," said a strange voice. "No larks, young 'un, or I'll—ah, would you?" This question was in consequence of a wriggle on the Infant's part to escape from his tormentor's clutches. It was useless.

Detective Gripp was not the man to let a customer go so easily.

CHAPTER XXX.

A MEETING LIKE THIS.

LOCKED in each other's arms stood the Lieutenant and Grace.

She had been introduced to her father, Old Martin, but preferred her uncle.

"Fie, Grace!" said the Lieutenant.

The Lieutenant wanted to know who that gentleman was in the distance.

"My preserver!" she exclaimed rapturously, and told them what an amusing and instructive companion Nutt was, and how she'd never enjoyed herself so much anywhere as on this island.

Nutt came up smiling, bashfully.

"This!!" exclaimed the Lieutenant. "What do you mean, Grace? *This* is the *Boomerang!!*"

Through all his change he saw it—the *Boomerang.*

"Once I was," Nutt replied, bearing himself erectly and showing off his dress clothes to the greatest possible advantage.

"Not now."

"A servant!" exclaimed the Lieutenant.

"A kind one," answered Grace extending her hand.

Nutt worshipped her now, and the tears rose to his eyes.

"Take her," said the Lieutenant, "and marry her."

"My consent is wanted," interrupted her father, Old Marmaduke.

"Stop!" said Grace. "I am another's — Piel Dornton's."

"True," was the Lieutenant's answer. "The contract was signed on that fatal night."

"Mr. Marmaduke, Lieutenant, and Miss Grace," began Nutt, much moved.

"Hear! hear!" said Commander Bouncer, who had not been included in the opening part of the address. Nutt rectified the omission and proceeded.

"Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I am bound to say,—ahem—that this is the unhappiest, though the proudest moment of my life."

Bouncer wept.

"Let me tell you my short, but melancholy tale."

Here the sailors came on shore in boats, so interested, through their telescopes, in this strange man's narrative.

"A ship! a ship!" shouted the Commander fervently. A ship, indeed. From it came a small boat, with Piel Dornton on board.

He landed, and after welcoming the Lieutenant, went at once to Grace.

She received him confusedly. Then he confronted Nutt.

Suddenly the blood left his cheeks and he would have fallen but for Old Martin, who fell instead, and hurt *himself.*

"*Hear him!*" cried the Commander, with true English

love of fair play, and some curiosity as to the rest of Nutt's speech.

"Lady and Gentlemen," he recommenced, "let me tell you my story. I was brought up at an infant school, and subsequently, being a boy of studious habits, was apprenticed to a lecturer at the Polytechnic. Here I acquired that scientific knowledge which to have learnt has made me supremely happy, seeing that it has alleviated the miseries of one for whom I entertain feelings of the most profound admiration and the deepest love." He bowed to Grace and proceeded. She felt he had never, even when dressed to catch the geese and wild fowl—never, never, looked so beautiful as now.

"It was here, too, I mean at the Polytechnic, I mastered that clear and lucid style in which it has been my highest endeavour to explain to you the wonders of nature, and the marvels, during our evenings, of the microscope. So well have we employed our hours here," he turned to Grace for corroboration, who said "yes," and begged him to go on—"That we have run through the entire cycle of Polytechnic lectures, including the dissolving views, which we really managed admirably, the drop of Thames water with the living creatures in it, the exposition of spiritualism, the automaton Leotard, and many other useful and entertaining experiments, including glass-blowing for the tails of peacocks and imitation candles which won't light, and we were proceeding to the diving-bell and blowing up the *Royal George* under water when your arrival interfered with our settled plan. Excuse me—to return. I quitted the Polytechnic to join a distinguished aëronaut——"

"I know you now," exclaimed Dornton. "This fellow," he said, turning to Grace and the Lieutenant, "is a fraudulent solicitor."

"You thought so, perhaps, Piel Dornton," was Nutt's calm reply, which seemed to crush the other into the earth. "When you threw my companion and myself out of the balloon into the sea. You thought so, no doubt, when you seized the deeds and papers, with which my unhappy companion was indeed escaping from the hands of justice. He *was* a fraudulent solicitor—not I. Let me explain: for he—well for him that it is so, perhaps! *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*——"

"Hear, hear!" said Commander Bouncer.

"He is no more. My aëronautic friend started his balloon from a public garden. Here it was hired by a private party. That Private Party was the Fraudulent Solicitor; I was told off to attend to him. He arrived with his deeds and boxes. His pistol was constantly at my ear, and I was obliged to give up all chance of escape and leave him, the balloon, and myself to a merciful fate —with my eye, however, always on the parachute. From above I saw this man give his wretched father the fatal blow in the Cavern by the Sea——"

"It's a lie!" shrieked Piel Dornton.

"It is truth, as I stand here," returned Nutt. "He climbed in by our grapnel when we were almost aground, and repaid our hospitality with another crime."

"The name of the Solicitor?" asked Old Martin, eagerly.

"*Smith*," was Nutt's answer.

Old Martin turned to his brother Leonard Charles.

"'Twas he," he said, "who drew up the lost deed. Smith."

So excited was everyone that they had not noticed the approach of two separate boats, whose occupants now stood forward.

In the first came Chekk, Diss, Count, & Co., rowing, with Gripp, the Detective, holding the Infant, and Snagg, the clerk, steering.

In the second, Bessy with Joseph and the papers, sailing.

Gripp spoke. "These papers, signed Smith, were placed in the hands of these 'ere respectable gents," alluding to the Benician Bankers, who appeared pleased. "By them he became the large landowner you've known him. By them," and he produced another set, "he took under the will of Leonard Charles Marchmont, deceased——"

"The villain!" exclaimed the irascible old man.

"*Everything!*"

"It's a lie, a confounded LIE!" roared Piel Dornton.

"No, it isn't, my Chirper, except you're alluding to all your papers as is a lie, a forgery, and no mistake. Who seed him forge?"

"I seed him forgin' 'em at his desk," answered the Infant, sulkily.

"You!" exclaimed Dornton. The net was closing round him now.

"Aye, Guv'nor, you cut a cradle down *from a tree opposite your window*. In that cradle lay a Child. I was, I am, that Child, and I've tracked you this day. I wouldn't ha' done it," he whimpered, "if you hadn't ill-treated *her*."

"Her!" exclaimed every one.

"Yes, mum," continued the boy. "'er, *'er*, as was the *h*only cove *h*ever kind to me."

Gripp shook him. Gripp knew he meant the Lady Anna Domino; but he said nothing.

"Now," said Gripp, "afore we finishes, let's clear up these here missin' papers. Step forward, young man, and young woman."

Joseph stood before them with Bessy. He showed them the papers, and the Lieutenant was introduced to his long-lost daughter, who, however, embraced Martin.

Then the two old men wept in each other's arms.

Then they all set to work to examine the legal papers.

We append the original will and Dornton's forgery, which will show the reader to what perfection the villain had brought the copyist's art.

PIEL DORNTON'S FORGERY FAC SIMILE.)

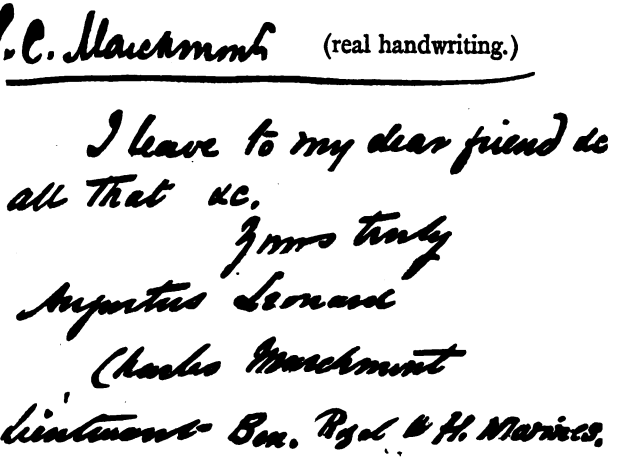
I leave to my deer frend, Piel Dornton, all my estates, palaces, castles, and all that there litile propperty known as £2000000000000000000000000, now invested in Benician Securities. In proof of which I sign and seal and deliver this as my act and deed.

Augustus Leonard

Charles Marchmont

Lieutenant B.R.H.M.

Witness. Smith



Nutt was of immense use here, owing to his having spent so much time in a balloon with a solicitor.

He pointed out the habendum clause, and explained all the flaws and the dealings with the various technicalities and difficulties, and when these were removed, it was as clear as daylight that Grace Marchmont must henceforth bear the title of Baroness Bismuth, with the property thereunto appertaining, which, as has already been seen, was no inconsiderable amount.

"A baroness?" exclaimed Nutt, sorrowfully, "and rich!" he turned away.

She gave him her hand.

"I am yours, yours always!"

He clasped her in his arms, as the two old men whispered to one another, The Baroness Bismuth and Mr. *Horatio* Nutt.

Then the partners, Chekk, Discount & Co., requested that they might in future receive the favour of their orders, which was accorded to them, and Gripp and the Commander shook hands upon the happy termination of their trouble. They were paid off at once, and the sailors cheered all night, and were with difficulty removed from the island in the morning.

Before they quitted the island, the bank partners explained that Joseph, by the decease of the late nobleman, a wicked elder brother, who had never owned his father, he (Joseph) was now a titled aristocrat.

And what of Piel Dornton! The convicted forger, the murderer, the cruel husband, the black-hearted, bold, bad man?

He had disappeared. None knew where nor whither.

"Leave me alone," said Gripp.

They left him alone, save and except that Joseph offered a thousand pounds for his apprehension, payable only if he was caught alive.

Gripp pushed his boat to sea. The Infant was crouched in the stern.

The Commander, who had become tired of inaction, joined them in the pursuit.

So they went upon the track of the forger, the bold black-hearted villain.

AND HE?

LAST CHAPTER.

THE END.

THE Bells of Benicia were ringing for the double marriage. Grace at one church to her beloved Nutt; Bess at the other to her own dear Joseph, now Joseph, Marquis of Mewsickall, with title of free-pass-to-the-Alhambra, and Baron Cancan, of Mabille, as a special honour from the Tuileries, whose motto has, since the events here recorded, become familiar in English mouths as household bread. We must also take this opportunity of adding, that Her Majesty's Government, determining to reward Lieutenant Marchmont for his distinguished services, patented him by the title of Sir Charles, to imitate which is fraudulent, and punishable by several acts of Parliament.

While these festivities were being enacted, another scene of a different sort was being played out by two performers.

In an apartment in the good Bishop's palace, which by a special rescript from the Home Office he had been permitted to let unfurnished, the tenant, Lady Anna Domino, taking the fitted fixtures, &c., on which arrangement we have neither time nor inclination to dwell now more minutely, sat the Lady Anna Domino.

On the opposite side of the room, behind a curtain, stood Piel Dornton, regarding her curiously.

"Beautiful for ever!" he muttered between his set teeth.

Then he stood before her, pale, with bloodshot eyes and matted hair—he stood before her.

She saw at once, with a woman's intuitive perception, that the end had come.

"At last," she said. She still admired the man who had so cruelly deceived her.

"Recrimination is useless," he said, slowly and bitterly.

"Yes," she replied, in a cold tone. "It is."

"The police are here," he added, looking calmly from the window.

She inquired what division, and with his glass he was enabled to answer her question satisfactorily.

"My mind is made up," he continued; and then, with a slight tremor in his voice which even now midst all his villain's cunning showed there was one green spot in that cankered sin-dried heart, he added, "what will become of you?"

"*What?*" returned Lady Anna, turning towards him. "Do *you* think of that at *last?*" She stretched out her hand to him with something of the old affection in her touch. "Go, Piel," she said, "go and poison yourself."

"I will," he replied, and undoing a large hamper marked "glass with care" which he had hitherto kept carefully concealed about his person, he extracted therefrom a large jar, and was about to drink its contents, when she arrested his hand.

At that supreme instant was it an old tender yearning.

She looked at him, then downwards at the carpet.

He had owned property himself in his prosperity, and divined the meaning of the glance.

"True," he replied; "as you wish. In the next room."

He walked towards the door, then turned, and in both arms held aloft the fatal bottle which contained a bright red fluid, and was marked outside with a hieroglyphic character known only to those whose trade it is to deal in such dread preparations.

Once more he spoke.

"And you?"

"I will survive to know that *you* are out of the clutches of these myrmidons of a cruel law, and then——" she covered her face with her hands, and sank upon a *fauteuil.*

He closed the door.

In another moment the officers rushed into the apartment.

"The forger, the murderer, the upholsterer—where is he?"

"Your warrant?" asked the Lady Anna indignantly.

The chief beckoned, and a private in the force stepped forward with a roll of paper under his arm.

"It is enough," she said. "You will find him there."

They entered the room, and returned almost immediately.

"There must be an inquest," said the chief.

"As you will," said Lady Anna. "At all events I am at liberty."

The polite officials did all that was necessary, and were subsequently entertained in the servants' hall until a late hour.

The Lady Anna being much pitied as the victim of a villain's machination, was *fêted* for some considerable time after his decease, and if there was the slightest stain upon her otherwise fair character it was at once removed by the good bishop, whose tenant she continued to be at an advanced rental. Only she obtained permission to change its name from Phlebosco Palace to the more appropriate title of Kreammawn.

So in the beautiful gardens of Kreammawn, amid water-works and fire-works, with lovely singing-birds, foreign and native, including the several rare specimens of the flying trapèze which, with cuttings from the boot-trees, and *genera* of corkscrew-fish, spoon-bills, and other such *lapsùs linguæ*, Grace had found upon the memorable island, and had presented partly to Lady Anna partly to the Benician Museum, were celebrated the matrimonial festivities of the happy two pairs, which lasted several days. Then the brides and bridegrooms left in a couple of steam-yachts, which had been previously blessed by the excellent bishop, for the dear old Eel Pie Island in the Pacific, where Nutt (who was now the Right Honourable William Nutt, elected to represent his new possession in the Lower Benician Chambers) built them a couple of houses, and stocked their paddock, and laid out their gardens, and charged them only half as much again as it would have cost them if they'd done it *themselves.*

And then they rested.

And on a calm summer's evening, with the aged Lieutenant, now obliged to wear a white wig, and support himself with a stick, and still clinging to the costume of his old Venetian regimentals, on one side, and, on the other, Old Martin, who, unable to shake off his old labourer's habits, was always dressed in the brightly spotted dress of the clownish order in Benicia, his red and white cheeks being, at his age, the external signs of inward happiness, and rude health; we say with these two, one on either side, would stand in the centre the happy Nutt, in a bright gorgeous dress and a black half mask, partially concealing his features, (the custom in the Benician Chamber,) supporting with his out-stretched knee and stalwart arm the form of his fair and beautifully dressed bride, while behind them rose a romantic bower, as it were, a fairy pavilion of imagination and fancy glittering, and dazzling, until among the plaudits and huzzas of the delighted populace, the kind Marquis Joseph, aided by his dear wife Elizabeth, would light up great fires of joy which shed their sometime red, sometime green light upon the glorious scene before them.

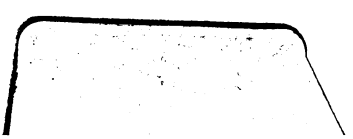
"Happy indeed," said Grace, in after years, "was the thought which occurred to me, dear, upon the Island of sending these FOWLS out with our dinner advertisements for the Island."

"Sending the fowls in that manner, and on such an errand *was* hazardous," would her husband reply, caressing his eldest son Tommy, who was growing every day more like both of them, with perhaps just the slightest resemblance to the pet seal which he had trained upon the Island.

"It was hazardous," would be her answer.
"It was indeed CHIKKIN HAZARD."

* * * * * *

Readers, we have done. This is the tale Nutt and Grace told to their Children.—This is the tale we have told to you.

THE END

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